

LONDON SOCIETY.

SEPTEMBER, 1886.

MY SWISS ROMANCE AND—THE END OF IT.

BY A CHRISTCHURCH MAN.

IT so happened that two or three years ago—it does not signify fixing the precise date—I took my holiday early in the year. I will not say my annual holiday, because for twenty months I had had no holiday at all. I was an overworked parson, whose nervous system had shown ominous signs of giving way. And no wonder. There are country parsons who seem to have delightful lives. Their libraries, their shaded gardens, suggestive of lawn tennis, tea and talk; their friendly intimacies with all the great families of their division of the shire, the refined leisure, the mutual hospitalities, all make up a tranquil and rich existence. Such life, however, was not for me. I was a town parson, an over-worked town parson. We had had a heavy winter, which means a great deal of illness and distress. Then came the incessant services and preachings of Lent and Easter. The calls at the door were so incessant that I might just as well, if I could only afford it, employ a hall porter to sit in a chair and answer that door. I had to put on an extra maid, of Irish extraction, who gave me warning and went to a cottage hospital, because she became ill through cold, draught and exposure. I, the master, fared little better than my servant. My house was like an office or, to put it somewhat coarsely, like a public-house. At any rate, people ate and drank there to considerable expense, without, however, exercising any privilege of paying. I was now revolving in my mind the pleasing subject of a well-earned holiday. At least I had been so revolving it in my mind for many months previously without seeing my way to any very definite result. There was always something or other that made it impossible for me to get away.

Among the happy, full-pocketed brethren to whom I have referred there is a great idea of having a good long holiday and spreading it over two portions of the year. When Easter is fairly over there is a grand opportunity of taking a rest before the final great Festival of the Church. Then, in the deep heart of the

summer and autumn, in the midst of the long roll of the Trinity Sundays, there comes another opportunity of a longer holiday. Every one knows that the best part of a clerical furlough, or, indeed, of any furlough, is August and September, or as much of August and September as can be secured. The two holiday operations might be described as the minor and the major. It is true that there is a staff of five of us, and I, as incumbent, am head of the staff. We make the vicarage a kind of clergy house, where we maintain a strictly monastic and mediaeval character, and volunteer to other parsons days of retreat. But somehow we are always one less than the full staff, through holidays or vacancies, and the work seemed illimitable and perpetually increasing.

On the Tuesday in Easter week, I was sitting in the common study in a state of great lassitude. I was pulling down some good tomes of the Fathers, in which our library greatly rejoiced, collating passages, and making some little way with the subject of our next clerical meeting, but by no means making so much progress as I thought, inasmuch as I was exhausted with work and a great sudden excess of heat in the weather. Moreover, we had had rather a stormy Easter meeting in the vestry only the day before, when an aggrieved parishioner had threatened to call a public meeting and report me to my bishop, because I had worn some ecclesiastical raiment of marvellous colours which had been presented to me by some guild of working women. I am sure I had much rather they had been working for themselves, and, in fact, was meditating much how I could best return their gift with usury.

While these thoughts were dividing the swift mind, our man, for we clergy maintain a man between us, who looks rather more ecclesiastical than ourselves, threw open the door, and, to my infinite surprise, announced Sir William Gell, the great London physician.

“Ah, Mr. Marden,” he said, shaking hands with effusion, “I have been over seeing Sir Arthur Devey—very bad case and very poor fee; but what can a doctor do when he is telegraphed for so urgently to a man of his mark? and then I got to this place for the rail, and having some time to wait for the local train I went to see your abbey church, and hearing to my great disappointment and regret—great disappointment and regret,” he repeated, slightly stamping his foot, “that you had not yet gone away I came on to see you and administer a slanging.”

“Doctor,” I said, my guilty mind striving to stave off the slanging, “have something to eat and drink.”

“Not a morsel. My train goes in little more than ten minutes. When I get to town I have a set of visits to make, and, if I am very lucky and have no new urgent case, I shall hope to get a little dinner about eleven to-night.”

"I am afraid you found Sir Arthur very poorly," still staving off the threatening outburst."

"Very bad. There was nothing for me to suggest except a water pillow. My visit was not worth my while, and would do him no good, but country doctors like to have a town opinion, and it's satisfactory to the family. My advice might, however, have done you good, sir, if you had only had the good sense and good manners to take it."

"My dear sir, I assure you that it is simply impossible to get away. I was wanted on every side."

"Nonsense," said the doctor. "No one is really wanted in this world. There is always some one to take his place. Why, sir, if you and I were swept away to-morrow, there are better men ready, who would do our work better."

"Still, if it doesn't signify, I should like to be allowed to stay here a bit and do it myself."

"You will never do your work if you do stay here. You are overworked, and mischief of a dangerous and insidious kind may soon be set up. How many sermons have you been preaching this Easter?"

"About sixteen in the octave."

"And how many people have you seen a day?"

"Why, it has been a very busy time of late. I think I must see sixteen a day."

"Well, all that is very insidious work, and quite against the advice I gave you, and, in the state of your health, positively dangerous. Now I have only two minutes in which to give you my advice, and if you don't take it I will never speak to you again. I am not going to tell you that you will have paralysis or softening of the brain, but this I tell you, that symptoms such as yours frequently lead up to such a condition of things. Get away as far as you can and as soon as you can. Now I must go."

It was in this way that it happened that I went abroad in the Easter vacation, before the London season had fairly set in. I was resolved that I had better not go alone, and cast over in my mind whom I could persuade to accompany me. I thought that my friend Richards would be just the man. I had known him both at school and college, and I was one of the few who could really get on with him. Richards was one of the masters of a great public school. His Easter vacation would exactly suit my time. I accordingly asked him, and, with a little grumbling and a decided protest, he consented to come.

Richards was a very conscientious man, and worked hard during term time. But he had a conscientious objection to any bodily or mental work out of term time. Moreover, he thought it his duty to abstain from smoking, for the sake of the morals of the young lords and commoners, during term time, with the result that all through the holidays he was never without a short pipe in his

mouth. His great delight was to go to some remote seaside place unnamed by Bradshaw, unknown to Murray, and there pass the summer recess, lying on the grass with a book, or, oftener and happier still, without a book. There were two things, he told me, which he specially disliked; the first was places, and the second was people. Like the celebrated parrot, he did not talk much, but was greatly given to thinking. When he did talk, he talked the languages of the Continent well, and he possessed a robustness both of body and mind which very well suit a person partially invalidated like myself.

So it was that we found ourselves in Switzerland. And to our very great astonishment we found ourselves heroes and celebrities in the country. We were the first tourists of the year. We were a sort of rainbow of promise of the coming season. We were both the first flowers of spring and the first fruits of autumn. Of course in the first instance we made at once for the Oberland. When we drove into Lauterbrünnen—and I promise you our driver drove up with loud resoundings of the whip—the native population was aroused to the inmost depths of their intellectual being. We attempted to fly off to Schilthorn, but we had to wade heavily through snow before we got to Mürren. Of course, so early in the season, both of the hotels were closed, and we could only get some milk and bread at a châlet. But how glorious was Mürren with the Yungfrau just in front and the broad circlet of the mountains with their everlasting crowns of snow. It was a matter of considerable interest to watch the behaviour of brother Richards under such circumstances. The lazy dog, on the few occasions on which he had been abroad, had lounged away his time in *cities*, without cultivating any acquaintance with the ice and snow. This I could by no means allow, for I had come out with the special purpose of being braced up, and braced up I determined to be. Even the phlegmatic Richards was greatly excited by the everlasting hills. There were tears in his eye, tears in his voice, and my private opinion is that he perpetrated a sonnet. From this point we went wherever it was practicable, and we continued all alone to see a great deal of magnificent scenery. Only, there was no doubt about it, we were too early in the season. We wanted to go over the Little Scheideck Pass to Gründelwald, and we were told that it was practicable, only we must count for four hours' trudging through soft snow. At Gründelwald we wanted to go over the greater Scheideck Pass to Meiringen, and if we had started while the stars were still out it might have been practicable, but now the snow would be soft, and we might calculate on an extra ten hours' walk. Similarly if we went over the Great St. Bernard there was a great probability that the dogs would have to fish us out of a snowdrift. Similarly it was impossible to get through the Furca. It is a great mistake, however, to suppose you must get to the highest elevations

in order to get the best views. It is very jolly to lie on some panoramic peak, say with your toe over Switzerland and your heel over Italy, commanding a tumbled sea of misty mountain tops and looking down upon all the world; but the view is not so beautiful as from many a lower height, where you can look up the mountain slopes and look at all things nearer.

The honours of priority were not, however, to be all our own. It was so at most places. As our driver loudly smacked his whip, the people would run out and be ready to carry us on their shoulders. But at other places there was just one pair before us, a Mr. and Miss Manningham. We nearly met them at Gründelwald. But while we had gone to the nearer of the two glaciers they had gone to the more remote, and so we missed. At last they overtook us and we met at Zermatt.

We were the first tourists of the year who had come to Zermatt. We had come up the valley of the Rhone, and now turned up the valley of the Visp. For those twelve or thirteen miles to St. Nicolas we had to walk the long up-way along the mule path. Only I never like surrendering my liberty to the discretion of a mule, and preferred the uphill trudge, which was pleasant enough in the glorious opening spring. I have heard of people fainting away while making this forced journey in the midsummer heats. When we arrived at our first stage at Stalden, we fell almost like a thunderbolt upon the hotel people. It was a big hotel, and we had a choice of bedrooms, but there was nothing for us to eat. They gave us cheese—very poor cheese—and eggs, on which, apparently, the inhabitants subsist for the three-fourths of the year during which there is no season.

Richards took it out in smoking; he could not touch cheese and eggs, they made him bilious, and he declared, that with his pipe and tightening his waistband, he could exist for a considerable period in a state of semi-starvation. With eggs and cheese for lunch we set off again in the morning, and rested for our slight repast by a pleasant spring in the green shelter of a wood. When we got to St. Nicolas, the biggest hotel was in a topsy-turvy condition. There was a regular house-cleaning going on with a view to the forthcoming seasonal campaign. We met long lines of mules carrying furniture and provisions to the different hotels at Zermatt and the new hotel on the Riffelberg. There was accommodation for muleteers, but we tourists were evidently regarded as decidedly out of order in travelling so early in the spring of the year. They gave us some Huntley and Palmer's biscuits, which I believe might be found in the Cannibal Islands, and promised us some veal in good time, which was so long in coming that I believe a blatant calf was sacrificed on our behalf. Here, however, began a grand road. All about us the sledge carriages were lying up, their work being over for the season; but for the first time that year a carriage was called for—it was without springs and shook

us horribly—and with a pair of horses we rattled again along the dozen wonderful miles that led to Zermatt.

M. Zeiler is the king of Zermatt, and all his subjects rushed out tumultuously to greet us as we made our triumphant entry. All M. Zeiler's hotels were closed except one, and that had only been opened two or three days before. There had been only one arrival, and that had been effected in a very unobtrusive way, a polyglot waiter, who spent his winters on the Riviera and his summers in Italy. All the energies of the establishment were aroused on our behalf.

They handed us over the pretty *salon* for our use, heaped up a log fire as the evenings were still chilly, consulted Britannic tastes by producing a bottle of long-hoarded port, and gave us a dinner of half-a-dozen courses.

Of course we were bent on climbing. We had our alpenstocks and were longing to make another entry on them. Our polyglot waiter was now on his native heath, his name answering to something like MacGregor, and we took him as a guide. We wanted to go to the Gornergratz, but he shook his head doubtfully, and said that he would do all he could for us. On the next morning we pass through the little street. We linger in the primitive churchyard by the graves of our countrymen who perished on the Matterhorn; through the meadow fields with their runlets of clear water, and the horned cattle browsing, and the emerald grass enamelled with flowers. Then the ground begins to swell beneath our feet; the narrow path trends through thicker umbrage, and by-and-by we reach the zigzags that wind in and out among the pines. Occasionally we seem to be descending, and then comes a steep bit of climbing. Now it is worth while to look back on what has been done, adown the Rhone, and see the white mountain heads of the snow-world as they emerge one after another in long procession. Our eyes are fascinated by the Matterhorn, straight before us and seemingly close at hand with its awful glacier and with its steep, smooth sides, which we can hardly imagine ever to have been scaled by limbs and ladders. At this time we began to notice patches of snow lying beside the track, at first touching it and then ominously increasing in size. Then the snow was on the pathway itself. Presently we were between ankle and knee in the snow and sludge. And now the fear seized us that after all we might not be able to come within sight of the Monte Rosa chain. We had seen it before and might see it again on our journey, but, in the meanwhile, the Matterhorn was a continual feast to our eager eyes. As soon as we left the first hotel the snow was thick on the path and we had to trudge heavily through it. Our guide told us that it was impossible for us to go further. Nevertheless we persevered, and then reached a green bright island in a snow-field. There we had a magnificent panoramic view, where all other mountains seem to bow in

obeisance to your own. It is better, perhaps, when other mountains are grouped around you and you obtain a clearer view of their valleys and ravines. There we stayed drinking in with exhaustless delight all the outspread beauties of the scene till desire of the eye was satiated and we retraced our steps amid the lengthening shadows.

When we came back to our *salon* we found that we were no longer its only tenants. An elderly gentleman and a young lady were dining at a table in front of one of the windows. We had ordered our own dinner for an hour later. We had a right to be tired, and lounged back in the luxurious velveted easy-chairs, looking at books and newspapers, and trying vermouth and seltzer as a restorative. The *salon* has a fair library, a goodly supply of Tauchnitz novels and other books that had been left by benevolent tourists. Richards immersed himself in one of the novels—it was only in the vacation that he read novels, and then he devoured them by armfuls—and was lost to all the world beside. I could see from my *fauteuil* better than I could be seen, and must confess to various furtive glances. I glanced at the travellers' entry-book, now open for the first time in the year, and there read, as I had suspected, the names of Mr. and Miss Manningham.

Father and daughter, doubtless, and with a strong family resemblance. He, handsome, florid, jovial, with blue eyes of keen intelligence and yellow hair. He wore a white tie, but otherwise he did not look very clerical. His daughter was a kind of softened and etherealized likeness of himself; the eyes were even clearer and more searching than his own; the lovely lips somewhat closely shut with an expression of meditativeness and even of severity. Those sapphire eyes were wonderful, and the whole bearing and expression that of infinite grace and refinement. All my theories in favour of a monastic life suddenly received a severe shock.

There was a leisurely interval when their dinner was finished and ours had not yet come on. Mr. Manningham was a man of the world, and was not one whom any foolish notion of etiquette would prevent recognizing. Richards the unsocial, foreseeing that a time of confabulation was probably approaching, had withdrawn himself to the open space in front of the hotel and had renewed the perpetual smoke.

"I am not certain" I said, breaking the ice at once, "that from this" pointing to my clerical tie, "you might not be a brother cleric."

"Ah," he said, "the white tie. It is there you persons have the advantage over us. They are really so cool that I don't see why you persons should monopolize them. Our black and coloured ties become dusty. Now we City men are very fond of being cool and fresh, and so we use the linen tie."

"Imitation is the sincerest flattery," I remarked.

"Oh we are not at all desirous of flattering you. But it is curious that the lay and clerical element should meet in this out-of-the-way corner of the world."

"I came away for my health. The doctor ordered me abroad. My friend, who is a master at a public school, is very kindly employing his vacation in bearing me company."

"Oh, two are better than one. I have brought my daughter with me." Here he made a gesture of semi-introduction. I bowed profoundly, to which she gave a scarcely perceptible bow in return, the introduction I suppose being hardly complete without the interchange of names. "I have no one else whom I could bring. I must tell you that this young lady will probably be Lady Mayoress one of these days. I am one of the aldermen, and my turn must come by-and-by. As it is, we shall have a great deal to do this season. I have just been elected Master of the Rapiers Company, and I supposed it would be best to come away for a holiday early to wind oneself up for business by-and-by. I try to do everything in a business-like way, even the business of pleasure."

"Which is often the hardest business of all," I said in a moralizing way.

"You never said a truer word in your life, sir. When our recreation comes to fatigue point then work begins. And very hard work indeed I find it pulling up these blessed hills."

Now to this circumstance that we were thus brought together in the only *salon* open in the only hotel I owed the beginning of my intimacy with the worthy Master of the Rapiers Company. Many English people don't like society, but in the present instance there was no other retreat but one's bedroom, which would prove rather cold and uncomfortable. Richards tried it, and had a long, solitary smoke up the chimney. He came back and made a great parade of answering letters, which he industriously spread out before him, but in point of fact somewhat ignominiously subsided into the novels by-and-by. The Manninghams and myself got on very well together. There was a piano in the *salon*, and some good Christian had left a lot of Mendelssohn's music behind, which Edith Manningham sang solely to us. It was like a little bit of England bodily cut out and transported to the wilds of Switzerland.

When Miss Manningham had retired, we three lighted our cigars. Richards had been trying to make his wants known in feeble French, and expressed an opinion that those beastly foreigners did not understand their own language. It appeared that he desiderated toddy, a matter in which we expressed much sympathy with him, to which we gave expression in a practical form when the materials arrived. In return our friend Richards contributed his quota to the conversation, and having heard of the civic

honours of our new-found friend, he expressed a modest hope that all the City companies might shortly be swept away from the face of the earth, and when he replenished his tumbler he drank to the health of Sir William Harcourt.

“What I want to know is,” he mildly inquired, “how do you justify the fact of your existence?”

“Not your individual existence, Master,” I observed—I knew that my point of order in calling him Master would not be disagreeable to him—“the existence of the company and all the other ninety companies of the city of London.”

“There would not be this effort to reform them,” said Richards, “if there had not been great abuses.”

“The abuses could not be so great if they have existed in honour and usefulness so long,” was the obvious rejoinder.

“I ask you, sir, how do you justify your existence?” demanded Richards, bringing his fist on the table with something approximating to a bang.

The Master responded with more modesty and moderation of statement than I had given him credit for:

“Far be it from me to say that a body of men, administering large sums which, strictly speaking, are our corporate property, that we have not found much pleasure and benefit in doing so, and are at times enabled to have an eye on our own interests. But, letting many other arguments alone, I very much question whether, if Sir William Harcourt or any one else gets our property into their clutches, they will ever effect anything like the good that we have done.”

“But show us the good.”

“My dear sir, nothing is easier. The whole *raison d'être* of a City company is really that it may do good. Now look at my own company, the Rapier Makers' Company, or, as they choose to call us in the City, the Rapiers. There is a very large property in our hands which we could deal with just as we choose. There is no law that prevents us expending our resources exactly as we like. Now look at the working of our system. We are a band of brothers as united as Freemasons, and delighted to do each other good. A poor liveryman falls into difficulties. If we can help him through we will, though it is only a moderate sum which we can bestow in such cases. If he becomes aged and infirm, we will give him a pension. We have one of the best public schools in England, and for centuries we have helped to rear a race of public men, scholars and divines. We have maintained numbers of these young men at college by our scholarships and exhibitions. We have several schools of minor importance in different parts of the country. Also we have two sets of almshouses which might be an example to any nation of what almshouses ought to be. Then look at our charities, sir. The London charities are maintained by the London companies.

Look at our work in relation to technical education, the great want of our age which our companies are supplying. Look at our donations to all the hospitals and infirmaries. Look at the contributions which we make to the boxes of the police courts. Sir, if you abolish in an utilitarian spirit the ancient City companies, you dry up a vast stream of charity and goodwill never more needed than in these days, you divest yourself of ancient and venerable traditions, and you deal a blow against vested interests and traditions which will cause the whole framework of society to reel."

"I have no objection to the frame of society reeling as much as it chooses," quoth Richards.

I thought the worthy Master's conclusion was too much in the style of the political peroration which is intended to bring down the cheers of a party. Otherwise I thought that description of the good works of a City company was very telling, and that I myself would be unwilling to put a finger down if that finger could stop the course of public beneficence.

"Then there are your hospitalities. They cost you an enormous figure."

"But the figure is enormously exaggerated. And we spend a great deal of our own money instead of the company's. I was free born. My father was a freeman before me. We are as proud of the livery of our company as a man can be of his paternal acres. Although I was a freeman, I had to pay between two and three hundred pounds to become a member of the court of directors. When I became master, I had to give a dinner, which cost me two or three hundred pounds more. Every lady, when she went away, had a box of bonbons, and the box cost more than the bonbons."

"At Mr. Mackay's, at Paris," said Richards, "every guest has a silver slab on which the *menu* is engraved, and it never is worth more than the dinner. It was really offering money to a guest, which I call an insult, but I pocketed the insult."

"Much better to have left it alone," said the Master, whose esteem for Richards, which stood at a very low ebb owing to his line of argument, was now reduced to zero. He took very little notice of Richards after that, which was exactly what Richards wanted, just to be left to himself. To me, on the contrary, he was very affable, and as he took his candle he said :

"You must really come and see Rapiers Hall. It is one of the few very pretty things in the City. I am there most days, and there is always some committee or other going on. I don't mind telling you that there is a little private room in which there is generally a little clear turtle soup simmering on the hob."

It will surprise no one who knows how inevitably people travel in grooves over the great high roads of Switzerland to learn that a few days after this Richards and I were proceeding up the Simplon Pass from Brigue. The tug begins almost as soon as

you have left the station, and you soon find the friction of the collar. Richards and I determined to walk, and walk we resolutely did, though the pace became more fatiguing and the sun hotter as we climbed the height, balanced, however, by the cold breezes of the ice world. We turned aside to lunch at the *auberge*, on a soft sunny spot where the turf was fresh, and eminently fresh the green leaves of spring, through which the sunshine gently shimmered. While we were discussing our tall flask of light wine, a travelling carriage came up and rested for a few minutes close to us. In it were Mr. and Miss Manningham, and they easily induced us to take the vacant seats. There are some fanatical pedestrians who can never consent to ride a foot, and Richards murmured something to the effect that he thought we were come out for exercise; and we compromised by allowing him to occupy the box seat by the side of the driver. Thus it was that we passed through station after station on the upper reaches of the road, passed along the bridge thrown across the cataract, passed above the tunnel over which the avalanche and the waterfall wildly throw themselves, on through the wondrous passage, which seemed almost a stalagmite cavern where the stalactites often rise amid the snows at the embrasures, until we came to the tall cross which marked the summit of the pass. It was a Saturday afternoon, and for some time past as we came along the mist deepened, and a small thin rain mixed with snow was falling. I suggested that we had better spend the Sunday at the hospice. If we went on that night we should miss the glorious scenery of the Pass of Gardo and the descent to Domos d'Ossolo; and as for travelling on Sunday, the Master, a sturdy Protestant, would not think of it. Edith Manningham especially regretted the unfavourable change in the weather, as she was exceedingly desirous to get some edelweiss, which she had heard was to be obtained in the neighbourhood of the Simplon road. Our driver, however, told us that it was to be looked for close to the ice on the southern side of the pass. Miss Manningham had seen some dried specimens at the shops in the town, but had never seen or handled the living plant. She had read a great deal of prose and poetry about it, and was a little wild on the subject.

When we came to the doors of the monastic-looking building, the three dogs rushed out a little roughly. How is it that they never have more than three dogs at a time at the Simplon hospice? The hospice of the Simplon, as our readers know, belongs to the St. Bernard monastery, and they have also a retreat at Sion. "The Lord loveth the gates of Sion" is the legend of the place. The good monks welcomed us kindly. The driver speedily found his way to a room on the ground floor, where were other peasants, and we soon heard a sound of corks and forks. We were conducted up a broad stone staircase into the refectory, where one of the monks, to whom the office of entertaining

strangers is assigned, received us very graciously. One portion of the entertainment was very curious. They gave us long pieces of dried tongue, possibly with the idea of teaching us to subdue our appetites and understand the rigour of the monastic discipline. This piece of penance being over, a really good dinner was set before us, with excellent wine; and the superior, who understood some English and liked to ventilate it, was very kind, and told us that that night we were the only guests of the monastery.

When the pious monks were withdrawn to nones in their chapel, the Master of the Rapiers said :

“I hear that those good monks never charge anything for what they do for you—do it all for the love of God.”

“They never charge anything. They never get anything for themselves. They entertain many thousand poor travellers. They only take you to the chapel and show you a box, into which you may put just as much or just as little as you like.”

“Noble, noble,” murmured the Master of the Rapiers. “They are as good as a City company.” I was pleased to observe that when the Master was introduced to the box he deposited a bank-note therein.

The next morning awoke clear and cloudless. For the second time within the week I was fairly domesticated with the Manningshams, with a degree of intimacy that in England would only be obtained by a very long acquaintance. In the morning, Richards, who said he always made a point of attending his parish church wherever he was, went to mass. We enjoyed all of the service very greatly, and I observed that Edith duly crossed herself and used the holy water. She said very charmingly that when she was in a Roman Catholic country she thought it right so far as possible without violating her own convictions to conform to the religious usages of the people. The holy water reminded her of baptism, and the cross of her dearest hopes.

It is pleasant to hear a girl—one does not hear it too often—speak of her convictions and her hopes.

But her father would not listen to her suggestions. He said he should go forth into the open air and meditate. When we offered him our company he did not in the least oppose it as interfering with his meditations.

“You see your occupation is gone for to-day, parson. You cannot exactly preach to the mountains.”

“No,” I answered; “on such an occasion as this I allow the mountains to preach to me.”

And the mountains did preach, and eloquently. They seemed to take for their text, “The strength of the hills is His also.”

We walked towards some snowfields on the edge of which we might expect to find ice. Edith thought that they might have a chance of the edelweiss. The expedition was rather long and

fatiguing, and the superior told us that we might have spared our pains, for this was not the direction in which the edelweiss was ever to be found.

Edith Manningham was really a remarkable girl in her way. She was one of the special products of our civilization. She had gone from Cheltenham to Girton, and from Girton to University College. She seemed to think, as do many other ladies apparently, that as women have not been perhaps altogether so intellectual as they might have been in times past, they had rather be a little in excess at the present time. Edith had got over the drudgery of scholarship, and could read Latin fluently and had some knowledge of the Greek Testament. That was all very well, but she had also an ominous knowledge of physical and natural science, and in mathematics had gone as far as conic sections. I could afford to smile at her attempts at classical matters, but in the other region she left me altogether behind her. She was a little vehement on the claims of intellect, and was in every way a follower of such women as Miss Herschel and Mrs. Somerville. I am bound to say that she had many pretty feminine ways about her and could talk wonderfully well about poetry and the arts; but still she showed the fashionable heresy about the predominant claims of intellect, and thought that the one object of human existence was the development of mind.

"That, I think, is rather a mistaken theory, Miss Manningham," I remonstrated. "Human nature is very complex, and the intellect is only one part of it. There are other faculties—will, conscience, affection. These, then, *plus* intellect, as philosophers tell us, make up our complex human nature."

"Oh, the other faculties can take care of themselves. It is mind that requires expansion and education."

"I beg your pardon, Miss Manningham. The other faculties require training just as much. They are all co-ordinates. They all require equal development. If one is neglected or unduly cultivated at the expense of the others, there is a derangement. All the stupidity and misery of the world are occasioned by the want of balance."

"So you think I want balance, Mr. Marden."

"I will not say that. But it seems to me that you, like so many in the present day, lay an undue stress on intellect. I think that you young ladies, with your new colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, are carrying things a little too far."

"Well, I hope I have a will and conscience of my own, and as for one's affections, the *Saturday Review* recommends that we should keep them well iced."

"I think that the tendency of mathematical young ladies is to become icy."

"There is one person who I am sure would not think me icy. I love him with all my heart, and I am sure that he loves me in

the same way. I would go anywhere for him. I would die for him."

"He is a very happy man. Who might he be, if one might in fairness ask?"

"My father! Who else could it be? The very best of fathers."

"You young ladies sometimes make ties that are closer even than the parental ties."

"That is not the case with me, however. I dedicated my life entirely to my dearest dad."

I wondered internally whether "dearest dad" would appreciate such devotion. I think, however, that such would be the case with the worthy Master of the Rapiers Company.

The next morning Richards and I set off very early. I had an idea that I might be able to find the edelweiss. I had made inquiries about the *habitat* of the plant, and had heard that it was sometimes found between the hospice of the Simplon and the village of the Simplon. We stole out before the Manningshams came down, feeling sure that we should pick them up again at Domo or on the way to it. At that early hour, however, the Swiss are up, and we met several peasants, travellers or labourers. One of these men thought he could guide me to a spot where I might fall in with the edelweiss. It was not very far from the track of the road, though we had to climb over a great deal of snow to get at it. Still we did get at it, and I was able to secure quite a handful of it in high perfection. I was so infinitely delighted to obtain it because I knew it would give great delight to Edith Manningham. The discerning reader will perceive that it was beginning to be an object with me to confer delight upon Edith Manningham.

They overtook us long before we came to the wonderful little Italian town of Domo d'Ossolo. The beautiful flush came into the girl's face as she gratefully accepted what I knew was a rare and beautiful present. The Master was much pleased. He renewed his kind offer of a seat in his carriage, but Richards had insisted that it would not be fair to inflict so much of our company upon them. Before we parted, to see them no more in Switzerland, he kindly said :

"You must come and dine with us at Rapiers Hall, as I said at Zermatt."

"You are very kind, Master. I shall only be too proud."

"Do you live in London?"

"No. My work is at Greytown, on the coast."

"Ah, then I shall be very pleased to put you up for the night, if you can be spared from your other friend."

I took out my pocket-book and made a memorandum of the engagement.

I had the fullest intention that whatever other engagement went by the board this engagement should be uppermost. I

am a man that obtains a great number of engagements, undeserving as I am of so much kindness. I once calculated that I might spend a couple of years in working through my list. But this last new engagement took its place at the head of all others.

I preferred, for reasons that were quite intelligible to my own mind, to call at the Master's lovely villa in the Regent's Park. I found Miss Manningham alone in her beautiful home—that is to say, however, to speak exactly, with a mild-eyed, mild-voiced old lady, a model of chaperones, never in the way, never out of the way. She said that her father, she knew, would be very pleased to see me at Rapiers Hall. At this time of the year he was there nearly every day; she knew he was there that afternoon.

I thought it best to make certain, and went off to the City to see him. I had a little business of my own in that direction, which, indeed, partly brought me to London. Then I went to Rapiers Hall, and was fortunate enough to find my friend before his hour of leaving. The hall was well worth seeing. It was a "thing of beauty," the existence of which would hardly have been suspected in the heart of the City. There was a pleasant court, around which ran a corridor, and a cool fountain splashed in the centre. There was a noble hall with a fine staircase made of marble, which some benefactor of the guild had brought from Carrara. The dining-room was hung round with portraits, chiefly of former Masters, with an occasional Lord Mayor or Recorder. On one side of the room there was a choice collection of rapiers of all ages and countries, a veritable armoury, disposed with striking effect. A portion of the plate, precious for age and rarity, was brought out for inspection. There was a valuable goblet of Venetian glass, preserved in a venerable case about the length of a rapier, which had a kind of legendary interest, like the far-famed "Luck of Edenhall."

The Master did not at that hour of the day make any offer of turtle, thick or clear. But he said that day week was to be a high day, a gaudy day. There was to be a royal prince and some great political personages, and the music that night was to be the best that could be heard in the City of London. Was there any chance of my coming up to town that week? Luckily my own little piece of business at the family solicitor's had been left unsettled. Then came the invitation to take up my quarters with him for the night, and, for the matter of that, for any number of nights.

It was certainly a magnificent dinner. I rather offended, I am afraid, my worthy host, by saying that the dinner must be really as good as my Lord Mayor's at the Mansion House. He begged to question whether the Lord Mayor could turn out anything half so good. The dinner was better, the guests were better, the attendance was better. What was pleasantest of all was that I had a great deal of the company of Edith. I felt strongly that it was

a *relique* of mediæval barbarism that prevented her from being seated by his side that pleasant evening. I am bound to say, however, that the Worshipful Company of Rapier Makers behaved very handsomely to the ladies. Edith and her friend, Mrs. Ross, in common with a large gathering of ladies, had a splendid dessert in the gallery while song and speech were flowing in the hall beneath. Afterwards, all made a happy party together, going from room to room, and viewing all the rare and beautiful things that were around us.

It was very pleasant to roll back in the Master's brougham to his villa, and that final half-hour in the drawing-room with Edith, after the worthy alderman had dropped into a meritorious slumber, was to me worth more than all the rest of the evening, dinner included.

I need not go on with this little history, how I sedulously cultivated amicable relations with the Rapiers Company and its Master, and laid siege to the Master's damsel. It is an old idyll now. There was, I admit, very great resistance and opposition on the part of the young lady. She was very like the princess, and thought what a falling off there was in sacrificing magnificent aims and submitting to the ordinary lot of poor humanity. Then she would never, never, never leave her dear father. The dear father, however, came out nobly, and said that young people were not the best judges of their own interests and the wishes of their fathers; a good father must desire to see his daughter settled and happy before his own time came, a line of argument which I zealously supported. So things were at last arranged. Richards proposed "to turn me off," which he did with a great deal of additional clerical assistance. Sir William Gell came to the breakfast, and said that it was the best thing in the world that I should have some one to take care of me, as it was obviously impossible for me to take care of myself. Then we started to extend and improve our acquaintance with Switzerland. The Master informed me that he could, he thought, procure me a good living in the gift of his company. I had no wish, however, to alter my position. It went to my heart to turn out my clerical brethren, and reduce our monastic house to the normal condition of a vicarage. But such trials have their compensations.

THE SHADE OF DIOGENES PEEPING INTO A COMMISSARIAT OFFICE.

WANDERING about with his lighted lamp one sunny morning in May, Diogenes came across a large, imposing-looking building, flanked on each side its doorway by two big lamps bearing the national arms, and inscribed above the doorway with the words, "Head Quarters, Blank British Staff." He had often passed this place and wondered what on the earth went on inside. He had seen redcoats hovering about, bobbing up and down near the windows, sometimes leaning out of them, sometimes smoking pipes, and wondered whether these were outward and visible signs of the Head Quarters, Blank British Staff. He had also seen men in different uniforms, dark blue and red, writing near the windows; sometimes people in plain clothes, but with a military sort of gait, passing in and out of the building; and sometimes a mounted trooper outside, waiting, like a bronze statue, with a post-bag slung across his shoulder, and conjectured these also to be outward indications of the Head Quarters, Blank British Staff. Having a strong curiosity to solve the mystery of the place, he held high his lamp to light the way and strode in. After wandering about among galleries and lobbies, at length he came to an open doorway, above which was written, "Commissariat," and through this he insinuated himself.

The first object that met his gaze was a tall, sturdy individual, some 6 ft. by 16 stone, in dark blue and white uniform, planted opposite the fireplace with a "daily" in his hand, which he was perusing in company with the puffs of smoke he was exhaling from a clay pipe. He might have passed for good-looking but for an expression of over-acuteness, of fox-like sharpness, which rather detracted from his looks. His name and title Diogenes discovered to be Sergeant-Major Jones, chief clerk in the Commissariat Office. Near him, on a wooden chair, was seated an orderly in red, also engaged in the operation of tobacco-consumption and in perusing yesterday's "daily," till his superior in rank should have finished with that of to-day. On a chair, in front of an iron-legged table in the centre of the room, sat a clerk in the same uniform as he at the fireplace (of dark-blue with white facings), but evidently a private, from the total absence of the gold braid on his uniform, which distinguished the other or chief clerk, and who was engaged in turning over papers and writing. He was a quiet,

intelligent-looking fellow, and wore the submissive, deferential look which his as yet humble rank imparted. The room was one of the barest and most uninviting, as destitute of temporal comforts as such dens usually are supposed to be. A peep of gas burned above the mantelpiece for convenience of pipe-lighting. Placards and papers adorned the walls descriptive of contracts, advertisements, and the inimitable chances of wooing fortune by enlisting in the Commissariat. Two deal tables, with iron legs to defy whittling, served as writing desks, while at one side of the room stood a rickety chest of small drawers, all numbered successively, and opposite, upon a table like the others, a correspondingly rickety cupboard with doors inclosing pigeon-holes of various sizes filled with books and documents. In one corner another similar table was loaded with army books and with guard-hooks bursting with old letters and thickly crusted with dust; and in the other a disreputable-looking iron camp washstand, painted of a dirty yellow, and dirtier still from want of scrubbing; a piece of brown soap of the coarsest and cheapest brown contract quality, and a towel, the sight of which raised a shudder, supplied the means of ablution. With the addition of two kitchen chairs, and one of hair-cloth and mahogany, abstracted from the inner office by the senior clerk for his private use, this completed the attractive inventory of the room. A close, musty, heated air prevailed in harmony with the surroundings, and this was still further qualified by the thick clouds of tobacco smoke that circled towards the ceiling. Fresh air appeared to be an element but slightly recognized here. From one corner of the room opened off a door into the inner office or sanctum of the senior commissariat officer in charge of the department in the district. This door appeared to be an object of much interest and anxiety to the clerks, judging from the frequent and meditative glances shot towards it.

By-and-by, the chief clerk, who, by the gold stripes and crown on his arm, appeared to be a warrant-officer or of highest non-commissioned rank, throws the paper to the orderly, knocks the ashes out of his pipe, and seats himself opposite a pile of letters on his table bearing the inscription, "On Her Majesty's Service," which he begins to tear open and peruse. As he finishes each, he spreads it out beside him, and proceeds to take a summary of its contents in a large book called a "register." Thereafter he writes out the replies, according to his special view of each subject, and places them aside for the signature of his superior officer. Diogenes wonders whether these are usually signed just as they are brought in, especially as he sees some questions in the correspondence that might be viewed in more than one light. Many of the letters, he notices, are mere red-tape differences passing and re-passing between the various offices in the building. For instance, one he sees from the Royal Engineer has a foot-note to

say, "This is evidently an 'Ordnance question,' passed for action to the Senior Ordnance Store Office." The Ordnance Store officer thereupon appends another note to say, "This is evidently a 'Construction and Occupation question,' passed for action to the Senior Commissariat Officer;" and the chief clerk of the Commissariat now adds a third note to say, "This is *obviously* an 'Engineering question,' re-passed for action to the Commanding Royal Engineer;" and so it goes, battledore and shuttlecock, between the different offices, till it is littered all over with memos., ere the mere preliminary question is settled of who is to deal with the subject. Diogenes from this begins to suspect that a good deal of the correspondence, as well as the tone it assumes, lies at the option of the clerks.

After a spell at his desk, the chief clerk gives a yawn and again resumes his newspaper and pipe. Presently a tap comes to the door, and a well-to-do looking man enters, and requests a tender-form for the bread and meat contract now coming on. This the junior clerk, a new hand, who was busy with these tenders, was about to supply, when the senior clerk, turning sharply round, demands to know the man's name, his address, whether he had ever tendered before, and sundry such particulars in a pompous tone of voice, to the great surprise of the invisible Diogenes, but seemingly still more to that of the junior clerk, who was still new to the mechanism of the Commissariat. He, the junior clerk, appeared to think that, with the books before him, he had all the information required, and, in any case, could equally well make these inquiries himself; and, to Diogenes, the interference seemed aimless, officious, and overbearing. These preliminaries over, the senior clerk orders his junior in an authoritative tone to supply the required form; the result being to show clearly to the contractor who was chief clerk there, in the event of any delicate negotiations thereafter. The contractor went away apparently quite satisfied as to any question that may have been doubtful to him before. Soon after this another applicant enters, and precisely the same form is gone through with him, and so on with each that arrives, evidently to the increasing mystification of the junior clerk. Only one, he notices, escapes this ordeal. This favoured individual seems to be familiar with the chief clerk, for he sidles up to his desk, and a whispering conversation ensues, during which the clerk quietly opens before him the tender-book, in which the names and offers of previous contractors are entered, and they part with looks of mutual friendship and intelligence. By-and-by Diogenes, who can penetrate the thoughts, perceives that the junior clerk is beginning to put two and two together, and that he is wondering why no such queries or particulars are required with regard to those who apply for tender-forms by *letter*, but that he, the junior clerk, is left to manage those wholly and entirely himself. While he is pondering on this problem, his thoughts are interrupted by

another tap at the door, and the nose of a well-known bread and meat contractor just projects an inch within the doorway and vanishes, and the chief clerk immediately jumps up and follows it outside, closing the door after him with a bang. Then the sound of opening the inner office door from the outside is heard, and presently its re-closing door indicates both being closeted within. There the conversation is evidently conducted in whispers, as nothing is heard in the adjoining office. Presently the connecting door opens, and the senior clerk enters and takes away with him the tender-book, and once more disappears. After a time the outer door is heard to open quietly, some one to slip softly away, and the senior clerk re-enters his own office. Coupling this little pantomime with his previous train of thought, the junior clerk ponders on the strange incident of this contractor—whom he identified from previous similar visits—having obtained three-fourths of all the bread and meat contracts of the district; how he had so marvellously shaved his prices as just to be a decimal hairbreadth below each of the other contractors, but enough to win the day. He remembered, too, the choice junks of meat (not the take-as-it-comes contract stuff) brought by the orderly to the senior clerk from this contractor; the visits of said contractor always carefully timed either before the arrival or after the departure of the senior Commissariat officer, and came to the conclusion that there were many things in the world yet undreamt of in his philosophy. He knew that informalities existed out of keeping with the Commissariat regulations, which he had been lately reading up, and which, among the first things, required that there should be no intimacy or private meetings between the clerks of the Commissariat and the contractors. Then the tender-book, instead of being kept in a convenient and conspicuous place for the greater convenience and security of contractors, from where it was not to be moved till the moment it was ready to be opened in the presence of the witnessing officer, was carelessly huddled away into a corner of the inner office. The tenders, instead of being dropped directly into it, were brought into the office of the chief clerk and accumulated on his desk. The present senior Commissariat officer, too, as it happened, did not come till about 2 p.m., and perhaps did not know of this or seemed to have quite enough to do and think of in his average five minutes' formality of signing the bundle of papers that were placed before him; and, in fact, he, the junior clerk, observed that the theory and practice of some of the Commissariat regulations were two very different things. Tenders also frequently arrived uninscribed outside the envelope with the word "Tender," and which, of course, were opened by the senior clerk as ordinary letters; but instead of the original envelopes being preserved as proof of this, they were carelessly destroyed, and the tenders merely re-inclosed in fresh envelopes (with or without a word of explanation in the corner) and dropped into the

tender box ; and this treatment, the junior clerk argued, might easily apply to *other tenders*. He had more than once admired his senior's manipulation of a letter the contents of which were desired to be privately known. When, however, he had ventured to suggest the preservation of the tender envelope, his senior had merely laughed in his face and remarked, "D'ye think he cares ? No need of that now !"

It is past mid-day, and a non-commissioned officer of the same (Commissariat) uniform enters, and the chief clerk and he "light up" and converse affably. The new-comer, it seemed, belonged to another office of the department in the building, called the "Supply," or that which takes charge of the issuing, superintending, and keeping account of the stores contracted for by the Head Office.

"How about the beef, Davis ?" presently inquires the chief clerk of him in a bantering tone.

"All right ; board met ; declared the carcase to be *cow*, unfit for use of troops ; slight reprimand—that was all."

"By Jove ! you got off cheap. Court martial served you right, you know !"

"Dunno. Carcase was *cow*, don't deny that ; but still it was only four years old, you know, which counts as *heifer*."

"Heifer be blowed !" retorted Jones. "More like twenty-year-old *cow*. Shame, though, Davis, to feed the poor fellows on such stuff. Draw the line somewhere, for any sake. Might as well feed them on boot leather when you were about it."

"Well," replied Davis, "there were two commissioned officers to inspect the rations as usual. What were they about if it was as bad as all that ?"

"Ay, but d'ye see ? here's the difference, they knew nothing about it, you did. Bloomin' shame, though, to poison the poor fellows on 'old *cow* ;' and to think that there was none to stand up for them but the regimental butcher ; and if he hadn't, no one would, and it never would have been found out except when Her Majesty's brave troops discovered themselves chewing lumps of cork instead of fine, juicy meat. Too bad, though," continued Jones with gentle irony. "Bloomin' fraud this whole Commissariat, 'pon my word."

"Well, a fellow must live, you know," grimly responded Davis ; "and if they don't pay you properly, why you must make the most of your opportunities. By the way, those York chaps are getting finely hauled over the coals. Devil of a turn-up there, and all through that beggar of a quarter-master being too greedy ; squeezed the contractors too hard, and would not be contented with fair profits. Beastly business, though ; the exposure and all that will set the big-wigs by the ears now, so that we'll have them boring and prying into everything and everywhere."

"No fear of that. Is that all ye know of them ? Last

thing they'll bother themselves about, I can tell ye," said Jones, who spoke with the authority of longer experience. "If they do, I know, however, who'll be first on the roll," he added with a grin towards Davis. "Ten to one on that."

"No fears, my dear fellow. Caution is the soul of business. It's only fools that are caught napping, and experience teaches even fools."

"Ay, just so," responded Jones, "which only proves the more what I said, what a bloomin' fraud is this Commissariat!" "Bloomin'" was a favourite word of Jones that embellished his every sentence. "Here, for instance," he continued, in a semi-soliloquy, "here is your 'Fair Wear Reports' of repairs that were never done; your 'Laundry Bill' for clothing that was never washed, and tailoring that was never done; your 'Chimney-sweeping Bill' for chimneys that weren't swept; your bad rations issued when good are paid for, Davis, and the trusty non-commissioned officer who *doesn't know it*. Here, too, is your 'Barrack Sergeant' who knows the costs and certifies the bill; and here's your easy officer who signs everything and passes the bill; and that's the way we do in the Commissariat. But if that's all in the way of honest trade, it's nothing," he went on, warming to his subject as he caught the wondering eyes of his junior, "to what it is in active service. There you have matters pretty much your own way, and if you don't make a good use of your opportunities, you are the more fool, that's all. Once I had the idea it was the right thing to stick to the truth, do everything on the square, and all that sort of thing which you carry away from home, as I did, but I soon found out what blessed folly it was. You get no credit for it, no one believes you, and you are none the better but a great deal the worse. If you neglect your opportunities you simply make room for others to turn them to better account. 'Make hay while the sun shines' is the motto which half a life's experience has taught me, and, if you can, make it honestly, but *make it*, as the wise Scotchman said; only don't be caught napping. We fellows must believe a good deal in the Spartan doctrine which I heard old 'Fireworks' talk of one day, that the sin lies not in what you do, but in letting it be discovered. It seems that those Spartans punished a fellow, not for stealing, but for being such a bloomin' ass as to let it be found out. However, so long as you don't rob the poor you don't do much harm, and the nation has got a long purse and can afford to pay; and, from a moral point of view, it has got just as good a right to support you as a gentleman as your superior officer, who gets five times your pay for doing five times less work. And the fact of it is, I never see the fun now of refusing a chance that comes in my way, nor, it strikes me, does any gentleman in the circle of my friends.

"Remember once," he continued, "when I was in Natal I had charge of a convoy of mules. Some six or seven went a-missing, and no trace of them could be found. I was responsible, and expected a devil of a turn-up. Managed, however, to square matters somehow in black and white, and the explanation passed muster without ever being questioned. A day or two later the whole batch turned up, or rather I discovered them myself in a hollow a short distance from camp, where they had strayed during the night. Here was a business. What was I to do with them? They had been already explained away off the Commissariat books. However, there were Boer traders about. A bit of negotiation, and that was the bloomin' end of them mules. Sometimes groceries or provisions used to be short—a thousand pounds or so now and again. Never had any difficulty in squaring that by one or other of the rules of arithmetic, or under one of the headings 'consumed, stolen, damaged, short weight, &c.'; and sometimes dead men, who were killed in action and could tell no tales, were made to 'stand Sam' for them. I was a fool, however, for all I made one day I spent the next in one kind of reckless extravagance and another. A soldier doesn't know how to keep money, perhaps because his chances of enjoying it are so precarious. What he makes to-day he may never live till to-morrow to enjoy, and he thinks he may as well use it while he can."

These reminiscences and episodes of past experience while away the time till about 2 p.m., when the conversation is interrupted by the arrival of another of the department, who has just returned from the Soudan, or rather from Netley Hospital, where, since his return, he has been invalided for a month. The signs of recent illness are still visible in his rather emaciated face. He is an old chum, and mutual inquiries are exchanged; but obviously the first thing to do is to send out the orderly with the post-bag slung across his shoulders to bring in (in disguise) the daily ration of refreshment from the nearest shop, along with an extra share for the new-comer; for a soldier in uniform dare not be seen carrying parcels of any kind along the streets. Presently he returns, and disgorges from his bag three pint bottles of beer and three mutton pies, which the three men jointly assail. After this there is a general "lighting up," in which the orderly joins, and four pipes simultaneously communicate their frankincense to the close air of the small room, under the genial influence of which and the inspiring atmosphere the conversation flows.

"And what's the news from Egypt? How did ye get on in the Soudan, or rather Suakim, wasn't it?" inquires Jones of the new-arrival named Riley, also a non-commissioned officer.

"Yes, Suakim. Didn't get on very well. Beastly place; heat awful; work hard, and spins you out sharp. Fit only for those black beggars, who seem dried to skin with the heat, and would thrive in ovens, I believe; must be the nearest approach to

salamanders. Don't believe Providence ever designed such a place for *bonâ fide* human beings. Nothing but sand and sun everywhere, all at white heat. Mules, cattle and camels, bought in at heaven knows what fancy prices, dying by the dozen from heat and want of water. Cattle brought in to-day plump and fat off ship. In a week lost a third of their bulk; in a fortnight mere skin and bone. No possibility of anything like correct account keeping. In reality, all that sort of thing little better than a farce. Get a rough idea of what to put down to strike an average, that is all; anything else mere guess-work. For instance, I weighed out 7,000 pounds of muscular beef one morning; troops ordered to move at once; every particle of it lost. Camels so many on book; a third less turn up next day; how many houghed, stolen, lost, or died, no one knows, but down with a round sum against each heading, and so on. Fact is, every fellow had enough to do to look after himself let alone worrying with accounts, books, and all that sort of thing; and the whole business was enough to drive a model S.C.O. (senior Commissariat officer) in a month into hospital or a lunatic asylum."

"Suppose you made a good thing of it out there during your three months?" inquired Jones, with a meaning grin on the conclusion of this little summary of experience.

There was a faint relaxing of features ending in a smile, and a negative shake of the head; and as the time now drew near for the arrival of the "S.C.O.", and the conversation verged on the personal, there was a "ta, ta" and exit, and the "supply" clerk once more repaired to his office, and the senior clerk, after the refreshment which these arrivals imparted, plunged into his letters to give them the last finishing touches before submitting them to his superior officer for signature. Presently he raises his head and turns to his junior, as if to give vent to a thought he had been ruminating on:

"Bet you he made nothing under £200 during these three months! Think not? You be sure he didn't go out there for nothing." And with this effusion and a sigh he bent again over his papers.

Silence now prevails, and there are occasional watchful and expectant looks towards the inner office door. Half-past two, and there is a sound of entering it by the outside door, and immediately Jones jumps up with his bundle of letters and rushes in with them for signature. The still watchful Diogenes sees that these mostly are mere forms, to which the clerk has simply to append the date and the titles of his officer so as to minimize as much as possible that gentleman's labour of signing. After the clerk returns there is a noise of scraping of matches from within, then of raising windows, and presently the fainter odour of cheroots mingles with the more pungent aroma of the outer office. Five minutes later there is a tinkle of a bell, and the

sergeant-major bobs in again, and presently re-appears with his bundle of papers duly signed. Then the S.C.O. appears for a moment in the doorway, cheroot in hand, and inquires if there is "anything else;" and, on the reply in the negative, he turns again into his room. Immediately afterwards there is a sound of footsteps passing out of the room and dying away along the corridor. The senior Commissariat officer has left for the day.

Up jumps the senior clerk, now with a yawn and prolonged stretching of brawny limbs and muscles. A burden, however light, seems to have been lifted off his mind. "Best S.C.O. to get on with, 'pon my word, ever I knew," he ejaculates, ventilating his foremost thought in the direction of his junior. "Never bothers nor worries you with trifles, or himself either, for that matter. Lets you do the work, and gives you your own time and way to do it, and what more do you want? And never makes a form of staying in the office when there's nothing to do. Never *makes* work by writing quarrelsome letters to get quarrelsome replies, and waste reams of foolscap before the matter is settled; and, what's best, signs almost anything you like to place before him, and 'cuts his stick' five minutes after he arrives. You do the work and he draws the pay."

Diogenes thought this view of the question not altogether correct, as from an open book on the clerk's desk he had seen that this non-commissioned officer's pay amounted altogether to about £160 a year, which many a poor English curate, highly educated, might sigh for in vain. And as for the work, considering the sample he had seen of it, he thought it was not so badly paid after all. With the foregoing speech the chief clerk "lights up" again, takes a bird's-eye survey of the street from the window, and resumes his paper, to complete any stray paragraph still remaining. Hereafter he puts on his forage cap, flourishes his cane, and makes tracks for the nearest "pump" for a social drain, while his junior still plods submissively at his desk, and the orderly rises to help himself to a quire of foolscap from the cupboard to practise calligraphy against his coming examination for corporal.

Four o'clock strikes, and the chief clerk returns and is closing up his letters and throwing them to the orderly to frank, preparatory to leaving, when a tap comes to the door. As no one enters in answer to the repeated "Come in," Jones goes himself and opens it, but immediately disappears outside, closing the door after him, and female voices are heard to mingle in the greeting that ensues. Then there is the sound of opening and closing the inner office, and the voices are presently heard to proceed from there whence mirth and laughter predominate. Time passes, and the orderly and junior clerk are meanwhile longing to be away, and casting impatient and wrathful glances towards the intermediate door, when suddenly it opens with a jerk, as if to surprise any latent eaves-dropper, and the chief clerk emerges in

company with two fair friends, who have braved the terrors of the H. Q. B. B. S. in quest of their friend. He does the honours of the place and shows them round, points out to their incredulous and wondering eyes the cupboards, books, and walls covered with placards and all the paraphernalia of the office of which he is head boss, and especially his desk, littered with papers and letters, indicating the voluminous and important correspondence which he conducts, while he leaves them to see for themselves his subordinate clerk and the orderly ever ready to jump at his bidding. This survey over, he does not, as Diogenes expected he would, leave in company with them now that his own day's work was over, but bids them adieu at the door, and appears to be delaying till they are clear of the building. Diogenes wondered whether this was part of the programme he had speculated upon before entering the building, as, from the conversation, he gathered it was not an unusual occurrence. Leaving the orderly to close the office and take the letters to the post, he now departs for the day, and meantime adjourns to the "pump" to while away another half-hour or so before repairing to his lodgings for dinner.

Diogenes, much exercised and edified at what he had seen and heard, and resolving to have another look in some day, slid through the still open doorway and passed out into space upon fresh peregrinations.

LIFE AMONG THE EARLY QUAKERS.

By A. C. BICKLEY,

AUTHOR OF "GEORGE FOX AND THE EARLY QUAKERS."

I.

AT HOME.

I WONDER how many of the readers of "London Society" have ever been to a Quaker meeting. It is a well-proven fact that numbers go to Salvation Army halls, revivalist gatherings, and even ritualistic services, merely for the sake of excitement, but no one ever heard of a Quaker meeting, at least for the last hundred and fifty years, being attended for the same reason. Probably, of all religious services it is at once the most solemn and the least exciting.

There is nothing awe-inspiring in the meeting-house itself. Inside and out it is alike plain, unpretending and neat, yet not devoid of an appearance of comfort and solidity. Within there is commonly a raised seat at one end set apart for the ministers and elders, the rest of the hall being filled with benches, on which the worshippers sit where they choose, pew-rents and, as a consequence, reserved sittings being unknown. As in a ritualistic church, one half is reserved for the women, the other for the men; and should a stranger accidentally take his seat on the wrong side, he may be sure of receiving a quiet hint to change his position.

The congregation come in without any of that subdued murmuring and head-turning common elsewhere, and take their places in profound silence. A few, but very few, bring Bibles. Some of the men—those with advanced ideas—remove their hats as soon as they enter, but the "plainer friends" keep them on till the clock gives notice that the time for worship to commence has arrived. As the clock is usually a voiceless one, the only notice the stranger has of this event is by the simultaneous removal of these hats, for attitudes continue unchanged, and, indeed, for many of the worshippers, the service commences from the moment they have taken their places.

Perhaps only few minutes of silence may ensue, but more probably it will last for upwards of an hour. In many country districts, where the congregation is scanty and ministers are rare

visitants, the silence will remain unbroken during the hour and a half or two hours the meeting lasts, and this for weeks and months together. I heard the other day of one where no word had been spoken for more than two months. In America the contrary is the case, and an American recently expressed his opinion that Quakerism is being preached to death in the States.

Suddenly, however, a member will rise and say a few words, generally prefacing his remarks by a text of Scripture, or perchance one will fall on his knees and commence to pray aloud. This over, silence again reigns until another Friend is "moved" to pray or preach. Very possibly the thoughts of some of the congregation wander; but if so, there is no sign of it—the head being kept bent and the hands folded. I have often wondered how they discovered when it was time to go home, for I have never known a glance, except my own, to be directed to the clock. This silent service is very solemn; an atmosphere of devotion seeming to pervade the bare school-like room as thoroughly as it could the aisles of a dim-lit minster. No child even wriggles or expresses a desire to go home; no Quaker boy ever abstracts his thoughts from mundane matters by cutting his name on a bench; nor can any maiden's eyes be detected wandering in search of novel or becoming headgear.

These silent meetings are the very essence of Quakerism, and without them the Society of Friends could not hold together. Even now, when the less orthodox wish to introduce singing—some have gone so far as to suggest a harmonium—they are a power, and no one can fully sympathize with Quakerism who has not attended a silent meeting.

Such meetings as these were certainly an innovation in England. During the civil war the difficulty was to get a quiet congregation, and ministers often had to preach amidst a chorus of shouts. These, when they were of approval, were no doubt highly inspiriting, but they must have detracted sadly from the dignity of the service, particularly among the Anabaptists, whose congregations occasionally ran riot, when the scene would only be equalled by an open Anti-Home Rule meeting in a district in which Irishmen are plentiful. Silent meetings, however, had formed a part of Mennonites' worship in Friesland for more than a century before George Fox enjoined them on his followers; and an early Quaker, who visited Holland and attended some of their meetings, records with much astonishment that "they were loving and had much silence."

A religious society as such is interesting to the theologian for precisely the same reason as a skeleton of an animal is interesting to a naturalist; but any one who walks through a museum will notice that while the galleries devoted to works of art are well filled, those dedicated to science are only occupied by a few specialists, the people preferring, and not unreasonably, something

that appeals to their imagination rather than to their intellect. Numbers take an interest in Quakerism who care nothing for sects which, from a theological point of view, are far more curious. The reason is, that while these sects are merely abstract, Quakerism is concrete, a something that is *en evidence*, and can be tasted and handled. I propose, therefore, in these articles to enumerate very briefly a few of the Quaker peculiarities, and to try and trace how far they have been beneficial to the world as well as to the sect.

In one respect, Dame Nature has not been so good to man as she has to the lower animals, for whereas she dresses them, she only provides him with the means of dressing himself. Possibly this may partly account for the fact that the subject of clothes is interesting to every civilized man and woman, and, therefore, I need offer no apology for giving the subject of Quaker dress the place of honour.

Only a generation back one could hardly take a walk through the streets of any large town without meeting a grave-looking lady, clad either in solemn black or sober grey, with a coal-scuttle bonnet almost devoid of trimming, or a man who wore a suit of mouse, surmounted by a broad-brimmed hat of the same quiet hue. I fear these persons must unhappily be numbered among the things departed, for I have been at a Quaker meeting where at least a hundred were present, not one of whom was dressed in the old-fashioned way. Even from an artistic point of view it is to be regretted, for, if not picturesque herself, the Quaker lady, with her spotless kerchief, lent an element of picturesqueness to every scene. In the year 1858 the Society of Friends saw fit to annul the rules which its formidable "Book of Discipline" once contained regarding outward adornment, and modern Quakeresses nowadays dress very much like ordinary members of society, although, perhaps, a thought less ostentatiously. It seems a pity that a garb at once useful and becoming, which had been so strong a protest against extravagance in dress for a couple of centuries, should have been thrown aside at a time when the need for such a protest is greater than ever. May not, too, the Quakeress put on the manners and customs of a woman of society with her garb? A few years will decide the question; the tendency is certainly in that direction.

Certain founders of charitable institutions left in their wills very particular directions as to the dress of the recipients of their bounty, even going so far as to name the colour and material of the stockings which were to be worn. At the time, the prescribed garb was no doubt appropriate enough, but the result has been that every charity boy at the present time is badged like a convict, thereby becoming a target for the youthful scorner, and, what is worse, has to wear a dress which is neither healthy, convenient, nor ornamental. George Fox was wise enough not to lay down any dogmatic rules on so delicate a subject; all he enjoined was

that the dress of his followers should be neat, clean, and unostentatious, and the distinctive Quaker dress was merely a survival of the garb worn by the poorer classes in the time of the Commonwealth, modified occasionally so as to avoid the notice which the retention of an older cut might occasion. Even the regulation grey was a comparatively recent introduction, the early Quakers wearing just what hue they thought fit, always provided it was not a bright one. Towards the end of his life, Fox was much disturbed in spirit by certain pretty Quakeresses manifesting a strong liking for a coquettish and becoming large flapped hat, then known as a skimming dish, and also adorning themselves with numerous long ribbons, and he penned against them a severe "testimony," denouncing their conduct as savouring more of a desire for masculine admiration than was becoming in maidens who professed to have renounced the pomps and vanities of the world. His admonition had the desired effect, the worldly-minded hat was thrown aside, and from that time till the "dress rules" were annulled, Quaker maidens contented themselves with a bonnet, varying in shape from time to time, but always scant in the matter of trimming, and so arranged as to show the face *en retraite*.

Fox himself was not so particular as regarded his personal appearance as were many of his followers. He was careful to be always neat and that his linen was spotless, and there, so far as he was concerned, the matter ended. Once, shortly after the commencement of his self-imposed mission, his fondness for clean linen did him good service. Being arrested at Patrington, ostensibly as a vagrant but in reality because he was suspected of being a royalist spy, he shook out all the linen in the bundle he carried to satisfy the magistrate that he had no letters or papers. Convinced as to this, the justice ordered him to be set at liberty, remarking that no vagrant would have such clean linen.

Although he was so highly esteemed that when difficult matters arose at the general meetings of the society they were usually shelved with the remark they "would leave it to George," individual members who thought he erred did not scruple to tell him so to his face. He wore his hair long, which, being contrary to the customary practice, gave great offence to certain weak brethren, who rebuked him for it. Fox merely remarked, that as he had not put his own hair on his head he took no pride in it, and declined to cut it off. John Parrott, an influential follower, however, did not fare so well, for he took to wearing a beard, and, declining to shave, was turned out of the society.

Some of the early Friends had odd ideas as to reproving the extravagant dress of others. Some wore only white, a few went about in white sheets. At Bristol, one Murford, "a man of mean condition, made himself a garment of goat's hair and sheep's wool,

and walked in it up and down everywhere, to rebuke the pride of the people in dress. Such another garment did Sarah Goldsmith procure to be made for herself, to the end that, being clothed therewith, having her hair dishevelled, dirt upon her head, and so being sufficiently nasty, she might go through every gate of the city as a warning." As a matter of course, she attracted no little attention, and was sent to prison.

About the end of the first quarter of the present century, a man named Joshua Jacob was a shining light among the Quakers in Dublin ; he took a prominent part in the assembly, which was held once a month for the affairs of the society, and occasionally spoke in the "first-day meetings." He was also what is called a very "plain Friend"—that is, one who adhered closely to old customs, and was altogether a highly esteemed and apparently a very worthy individual. One of his theories was that the prophetic inspiration, which some of the early Quakers believed they possessed, and termed "revelations" or "openings," had not died out, and that he was as veritably inspired as ever was Jewish prophet. His earlier "openings" related chiefly to the errors the society had committed in not keeping to their primitive customs. Many of the Dublin Friends believed in his pretensions, and his commands were obeyed and himself honoured as became a man of such wonderful powers. In obedience to his behest, they returned to the cumbersome forms of language and antiquated usages common in the days when Loe made so gallant and unsuccessful an attempt to convince the Irish of the errors of Popery and the superiority of Quakerism. Some of the Dublin Friends had been so lax as to put on mourning, a few even allowed pictures and musical instruments in their houses ; and had he gone no further, he would have done little harm in persuading them to discard these things ; but, unhappily, this did not content him, so he insisted that all men and women ought to wear white or the nearest approach to it they could possibly procure. His own dress was composed of shoes of untanned leather, white flannel breeches and coat, unbleached cotton stockings, and a very light-coloured broad-brimmed hat. His wife clad herself in unbleached calico from head to foot. His house was whitewashed inside and out, and his costly furniture—for he was a wealthy man—was replaced by common white wood. His enthusiastic wife went so far as to smash every article they had which was not as white as the driven snow, and Jacob called her a noble woman for it. No warrant being found in the writings of the Quaker fathers for such eccentric proceedings, Jacob was "disowned," whereupon he set up a sect of his own, inculcating a highly doubtful code of morals, which he made a gallant effort to live up to. In the end the society came to grief, and Jacob turned Roman Catholic. It is possible that these mad acts led to the "dress rules" being abrogated earlier than they would otherwise have been.

The home life of the early Quakers differed very little from that of other Puritans so far as outward appearance was concerned, but directly the door was closed the difference was apparent. According to the rules of the society, men and women are in every respect equal in religious and social matters; the wife can be a minister or an elder just as well as her husband, and if she feels called thereto, is at full liberty to speak in the meeting. All readers of Puritan literature know that with whatever respect women may be mentioned, there is always an implied reservation that they are the inferiors of man, and the Puritan husband was usually in a very real sense lord and master. With the Quakers this was not so; the equality in the meeting-house was largely carried into the home life, and that it was not more complete was only on account of the one-sidedness of the law. As may be expected, Quaker households were usually very happy ones. The Friends insisted that only members of their society might be united, and both before and after the marriage assisted in making the wheels of life run smoothly, although it is to be feared they often insisted in turning them a good deal more than was necessary.

Before two Quakers could marry—that is, and remain in the society—the parties were required to attend a meeting and publicly announce their intention of being wedded. A committee was then appointed, which instituted inquiries to discover, among other things, whether the man was in a position to marry, and whether he was free from the claims of any earlier affection. They also inquired into the state of his health, and whether his relations had any objection to his marrying, and if not, if they saw reason to object to the wife he had chosen. A committee of women made similar inquiries regarding the girl, and were very particular in examining whether she had ever flirted unwisely or otherwise misconducted herself. That the young couple had not sufficient means to marry upon was not considered in itself an insuperable bar, for the society, not having the fear of Malthus before its eyes, had a fund from which grants could be made towards furnishing. In very early times the parties were expected to be accompanied by their parents, or at the least to bring duly signed and witnessed assents from them, when they attended to announce their intention of getting married, but this was soon given up.

On a date fixed, the parties were required to attend another meeting, when, after they had stated they were still in the same mind, and if the committees of inquiry had reported favourably, permission to marry was formally given, and a day for the nuptials fixed.

There was no approach to a formal ceremony at the wedding. After a period of worship—generally silent—the engaged pair stood up and took each other for better or worse; a certificate

recording the fact was then read and signed by a number of witnesses, never less than twelve; then perhaps a few Friends might be moved to speak, but if not, silent worship was resumed as calmly as if nothing of importance had just taken place.

Fox never lost an opportunity of impressing on his followers the importance of having marriages duly witnessed and registered, for very early in the history of the society an event occurred which showed the necessity for these details. In England, unless the parents have been married according to law, the children are, as every one knows, illegitimate. The primitive Quakers were in rather an awkward fix, for their consciences would not allow them to be married at church, and there was in those days no by-way to matrimony *via* a registrar's office. From about the year 1650 they had taken each other in the manner described, and lest questions should arise, they had been studious that the certificates should be largely signed. Some of the certificates are still in existence, and frequently bear the signatures of thirty or more witnesses. Still their children were taunted with being bastards, and the validity of the ceremony was constantly denied.

The legality of these marriages was set at rest for ever in 1662 by a case tried at Nottingham. A few years before a man and woman had been married in Quaker fashion, and after the lapse of two years the husband died, leaving his wife with child. On the birth of the infant, it was presented as heir to the father's copyhold estates and duly admitted, but shortly afterwards a suit to obtain the lands was brought by the next heir on the ground of the child's illegitimacy. The plaintiff's counsel declared that no Quaker marriages were lawful, "for," he affirmed, "they go together like brute beasts." The judge took a different view. "There was a marriage in Paradise," he said, "when Adam took Eve and Eve Adam, and it was therefore the consent of the parties which made a marriage. As for the Quakers, I do not know their opinions, but I do not believe what has been said of them, but that they marry as Christians, and therefore I consider the marriage lawful and the child lawful heir." Hereupon the jury returned a verdict for the defendant; and whether the judge's argument was sound or not, Quaker marriages have ever since been indisputable. Indeed, Quakers and Moravians are so specially privileged that there is no need for the registrar to attend their weddings as must be done at those of other Dissenters. Fox, however, was not quite content, for he wrote to a schoolmaster in whose erudition he had great confidence, telling him to "search histories and laws, and see what thou canst bring out both bad and good, and what maketh a marriage." What the result, if any, of this letter was is unknown.

Considering how little the doctrines of the Friends differed from those of several other sects it seems hard that a Quaker who married out of the society should be disowned; but it must be

remembered, that of all mixed marriages—not too frequently happy—those between a Quaker and a member of another denomination would be least likely to be successful. Trivial matters of speech, and small social conveniences, which would be harmless to the one would appear sinful to the other, and serious friction would inevitably occur. As time went on and manners changed the difference between the Friends and other creeds became lessened, and in 1858 the society felt the time had come when it might annul this rule, though reserving the right to expel any member who married without formal consent, which has proved a sufficient safeguard.

I may be pardoned for giving here an extract from a letter to his son written by John Croker, a Quaker who died early in the eighteenth century, which will give far better than I could hope to do an epitome of the way in which the sect regarded matrimony:

“Let not thy mind out too soon whilst thou art young, but rather tarry till the years of twenty-five or thirty, and then thou wilt have consideration; and God, if sought unto, will so direct thee that thou mayst have a wife who may be suitable for thee, and helpful to thee in all conditions, both spiritual and temporal, for therein consisteth the great joy of a married life. Therefore be sure choose one who cometh of an honest stock, and whose conversation is mostly with the well-inclined; for if any delight to be full of idle discourse the inclinations of such lead to vanity, and the end thereof will be sorrow; from such turn away. Choose one that is solid, whose words are few and savoury, and whose delight is to be with the faithful, such as keep themselves from the spots of the world. Choose not by the eye as to beauty, nor to the abundance she may have of this world, for by these many have been deceived and have found sorrow in the end; but let the eye be to the better part. And when joined together, remember you twain be as one flesh; love and cherish her as becomes a faithful husband; be not froward, but mild and gentle, full of love and condescension, bearing and forbearing. . . . And when troubles of this world happen—in which thou must expect to meet with a share—you will be a help and great rejoicing one to another; and happy will thy life be in such an one, for she will be contented with thee in all states. . . . And if the Lord should see fit to give thee children, desire of Him a blessing for them that they may grow up in His favour, and that He may give thee wisdom to bring them up to His honour. . . . When thou chastisest them, do it not in anger, but in love and gentleness and with mild words.”

It is pleasant to know that Croker practised as well as preached, as is shown by the brief account he gives in his diary of his courtship. “I now began,” he writes, “to think of a settled life,

and I had my eye on a virtuous young woman, the daughter of John and Margery Peters, of Minver. I was not hasty in proceeding, but well considered it, and laid the thing before the Lord in my heart, desiring that if it were not the Lord's pleasure it should be so He would remove it out of my mind, or else that He would increase my love towards her, which I found still continued with me. But when I was retired before the Lord, I could think of her with abundance of sweetness, although I had not seen her for some time, nor ever (that I remember) had I been in her company above twice, she living at about twenty-six miles distance from me, and I had not been more than once to their house though often invited by her parents. While I was thus impressed, I heard there was one of greater worth in the world than myself endeavouring to gain her affections. Then I thought if she did not answer him, after it was at an end I would make known my feelings. Some time after I heard the other was put by; I then made my mind known to my father, and desired his thoughts, to which he did not seem very inclinable, saying he did not know; 'but,' said he, 'I love her parents and would not have thee be too hasty.' So I waited some time longer and then spoke to my father again, who said if I could not be easy without it I might go and see her, which I thought was sufficient. I therefore set forward, and when I came there I opened my mind to her father and mother, who wanted to know if I had my father's consent in this matter. I told them I had, and that without their leave I should not mention anything to their daughter, whom I truly loved; so if they thought proper I would leave the consideration of it and go home, or by their leave I would mention the same to my dear friend their daughter. On this they were silent for a time, so I took the opportunity of walking in the fields for a little while, and then came in and spent the evening in conversation with the father, mother, and daughter. Next day I had liberty to make my mind known to my dear friend Anne. So having the opportunity, after some little time I let her know what had been in my mind, desiring her to take it into consideration; to which she said it was of great moment and there was need of time, for she desired not to enter into any such engagement until she was well satisfied. So I went home to my father and acquainted him how things stood, and he hoped it would be well."

In due course the pretty Anne was satisfied. They were married, and for three years led as happy a life as ever fell to the lot of mortals, and then she died in childbirth.

Croker's advice to his son gives a general hint as to the way in which Quaker children were brought up, and strict though the discipline was, their lives were far happier than those of the generality in those times of the rod. Unhappily, ample as Quaker writings are, they contain very little regarding home life, and even the numerous "diaries" are full of theological disquisitions.

That the Friends did not dislike their children playing is proved by George Fox once giving a piece of land specially as a play-ground, but the play was expected to answer some definite end, such as keeping them in the fresh air or strengthening their limbs. At home they were treated as weaker brethren in the truth, for by birth they were as fully recognized members of the sect as their parents, and the rule was tender. A Quaker father, writing to a schoolmaster, tells him to whip his children if they need it, but to be careful that it is necessary and not done in anger or for trivial faults.

The houses of the Friends were only distinguished by the absence of pictures, musical instruments, and light reading; the furniture, too, was usually unornamental and solid, the Friends carrying their dislike to shams so far as to look askance at veneering. In my next article I hope to deal with the far more interesting question of the early Quakers in their relations with their neighbours.

(To be continued.)

DROITWICH AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

BURIED away in the very heart of England lies the old town of Droitwich, a place so little known that a majority of people will hardly be able to say in which county the town is situated. It is dimly associated in their minds with the production of salt, and is frequently placed in the same district as Nantwich and the Cheshire salt mines by other than Worcestershire folk. At the same time it is not an inaccessible town, for it has a joint station on the Birmingham and Worcester branch of the Midland line and the Great Western railway between Worcester and Kidderminster. From the railway, as we catch a glimpse of a smoky, grimy, and tumble-down collection of houses and chimneys, it must be admitted that Droitwich has not an inviting appearance; yet on a closer acquaintance with the ancient borough we shall find that apart from the dirty manufacturing quarters there are many points of interest in the town, some fine houses, and as fair a country as even Worcestershire can show within the immediate neighbourhood, all worthy of a visit.

The importance of Droitwich has always depended on the salt industry, so remarkably developed by the rare commercial success of the present M.P. for the division, Mr. J. Corbett. From the very dawn of history, salt has been evaporated from natural brine springs which occur in a limited area of the valley in which Droitwich stands. The very name embodies a record of the salt works, if we may accept the authority of Dr. Nash, the well-known historian of the county of Worcestershire. He derives the name of the borough from the two words *droits*, rights, and *wych*, salt spring. Records of the industry occur in the "Saxon Chronicles," and in the "Doomsday Book," while the Romans during their four hundred years' occupation of Britain evidently knew of the existence of brine springs at Droitwich. Traces of the Roman road are now met with a few feet below the present surface of the land, and many interesting remains have been unearthed which prove the previous existence of a colony of Romans, the members of which were no doubt occupied in the extraction of salt from the surface springs. It has been our fortune to meet with several gold coins of the time of Augustus found on the site of excavations in Droitwich, all in an admirable state of preservation, and many fragments of pottery are from time to time discovered.

For many centuries the natural salt springs bubbled up to the surface, the greater part of the brine finding its way into the Salwarpe stream and thence into the Severn; in this way thousands of gallons of valuable brine were wasted, a small proportion only being saved for industrial purposes. But gradually, as years passed away, the surface supply of brine failed, slight saline traces only remained in the upper marls, with brackish water; in order to reach the brine, pits had to be sunk and wells bored.

At the present time shafts are sunk from 100 feet to 120 feet from the surface, through the red marls of the trias formation. The experiences of the borers are curious. After the clays are pierced, the steel rods strike a hard, calcareous substance, which invariably lies above the salt cavities. It is a mixture of sand and rock salt, cemented together into a hard bed by gypsum. The steel rods rebound again from this stratum, and considerable force is necessary to break through the eighteen inches of hard rock below. Suddenly resistance is overcome, the steel falls through a cavity of several feet, and the brine wells up with the greatest rapidity. Men, indeed, have been drowned before escape from the opening was possible. From these wells a never-failing supply of brine is pumped up from the natural reservoir below to the artificial tanks above, there to await the process of evaporation.

The consequence of so much solid matter in solution being pumped from the saliferous marls is remarkably apparent in Droitwich. Not only is the traveller struck by the grimy state of the town, but also by the strangely irregular look of houses, walls, and chimneys. The latter stand up at all angles, some leaning in one direction, some in another. A continual subsidence is going on. Sometimes a house or two will collapse and disappear. A huge crack will rend the wall of another in a single night, and a gradual change of level is taking place in all directions. Twenty-five years ago water ran down the side of one of the main streets of the town—to-day a bucket of water thrown down will run in exactly the opposite direction. The parish church of Dodderhill split in the middle, and has been more than once patched up. The canal bed has sunk eighteen inches since it was constructed, and most houses show some sign of displacement in the lower part of the town. For miles along the valley the course of the subterranean salt cavities can be traced: half an acre of a field has fallen in here, a crack appears there, and the ground is irregular for some four miles away from Droitwich.

The brine in the liquid state is caused by the fresh water permeating through solid beds of rock salt, the disintegration of which forms the strong brine solution collected in cavities at a lower level, from which the rock salt has before disappeared. This natural reservoir is known to exist underneath Droitwich,

extending down the synclinal axis of the valley for several miles in length, and about 200 yards in breadth, the widest part lying immediately beneath the town, parallel with the canal and Midland railway.

The strength of the brine is extraordinary, surpassing even the Dead Sea water in density. The following table shows the different strength of the various oceans as compared with the Droitwich salt springs.

Taking the solid constituents contained in 10,000 parts of sea-water, we find :

The Mediterranean	has 410 grains
The English Channel	„ 380 „
The German Ocean	„ 325 „
The Baltic	„ 168 „

while the Dead Sea has 24·6 p.c. of solid matter, and the Droitwich brine 38·40.

The saturation point of common salt is 42, so that the strength of the Droitwich springs is very remarkable. The chemical properties are singular, corroding almost any metal. We have seen a strong iron pipe so eaten away by the brine that the piping might be cut through like so much soap. Marble slabs become gradually pulverized by the action of the water; no cement can withstand its influence, and any woodwork quickly becomes rotten. If the brine should be boiled in a copper vessel, even reduced in strength by three-fourths, precipitation is set up at a certain temperature, the water becoming a brilliant blue, while the copper vessel is blackened up to high-water mark.

From the very fact of the density of the Droitwich water, extreme buoyancy follows as a matter of course. A sudden plunge into the swimming bath at the bathing establishment by the uninitiated stranger is often a very ludicrous affair. Unprepared for the novel powers of the dense waters the most accomplished diver is helpless. Either he rolls about the surface of the water like an empty cask, unable to sink beneath the briny deep, or his head flops down, and his feet remain above; no effort, however frantic, will restore his equilibrium until assistance is obtained and suffocation thus avoided. An egg, placed on the surface of the water, remains absolutely *on* the water, and it cannot be made to sink; and many other instances might be noted of the curious experiments which have been made.

The medicinal qualities of the Droitwich salt baths have of late years been highly spoken of. A regular system of baths has been organized under medical supervision. Patients are sent from all over England for rheumatism and kindred diseases. From personal observation and experience we can testify to the healing powers of the brine baths. Many cripples who come to the admirably-managed cottage hospital derive great benefit from the

bathing, regaining strength and, in many cases, power of locomotion. That the brine is a powerful agent cannot be doubted, and very often the first experience is discouraging, bringing out suppressed rheumatic or gouty affections in a manner similar to the Buxton baths. Since the Worcester meeting of the British Medical Association several years ago, considerable attention has been directed to the Droitwich waters, and increasing numbers of invalids annually visit the establishment; it will probably develop into an important watering-place as the properties of the brine baths become more generally known and the accommodation for visitors improves.

The surrounding country is very beautiful, the walks and drives being of great variety. The historical city of Worcester is but seven miles away, the cathedral and famous china manufactory always being worth a visit. The grand range of the purple Malvern Hills is within sight from St. Peter's side of Droitwich, and the unsurpassed English river scenery of the Severn Valley is within easy reach. Hindlip (the seat of the Allsopps) possesses historical interest through its association with some of the chief actors in the Gunpowder Plot. Readers of Harrison Ainsworth's novel, "Guy Fawkes," will recollect the incidents attending on the capture of Father Garrett in the neighbourhood of Hindlip and Spetchley. At Hindlip the reverend father lived in the chimney for some time, subsisting chiefly on apples, until at length hunger forced him to surrender to the military escort occupying the house; and, if we remember right, other exciting chases occurred about the same period in this locality.

The black and white timber houses of Worcestershire are well worth a study. At the village of Salwarpe, two or three miles only from Droitwich, there is an admirable example of this style of building. It has lately been under restoration, but the more salient features of the house have been preserved. In this house Warwick the "King Maker" is said to have been born, though probably little of the original structure now remains. It is a pleasant walk by the canal bank from Droitwich to Salwarpe, the overhanging trees, green banks, and circuitous course resembling river, rather than canal scenery. In passing through the village of Salwarpe we may rest a few moments in the still quiet of the churchyard to examine a noble sycamore, standing like a giant in the midst of the smaller trees. The trunk is of great circumference; some eight to ten feet from the ground five huge branches divide, forming a space inside of which several persons could be comfortably seated in an open bower; there is, perhaps, not such another sycamore to be seen in England.

About one mile away from Droitwich lies Westwood Park, the residence of Lord Hampton (the first peer being better known as Sir John Pakington). The red brick mansion was designed somewhat in the style of a French château, standing in the midst of a

well-wooded park, and commanding an extensive view across the lake and down the broad green drives. Of late years the house has been closed, but visitors are allowed to wander through the park and woods.

Mr. Corbett, M.P. for the Droitwich division of Worcestershire, has built a fine mansion at Impney, between the borough and his own salt works at Stoke. No expense was spared in the erection of this residence, while the grounds have been most skilfully laid out. The owner is generally willing to allow visitors to see the grounds, with the small Salwarpe stream so artfully turned through the gardens and adapted as ornamental waters; neither is it a difficult matter to obtain permission to view the interior of the house, the decoration and furnishing being very splendid; many fine pictures hang on the walls and some beautiful statuary adorns the reception rooms.

The commercial success of Mr. John Corbett, who has attained to his present position of great wealth and influence solely through his own efforts, forms a prominent example of those characteristics which have given England such a leading industrial position in the world. As a proof of the magnitude of the salt-mining operations (the chief part of which have been accomplished by Mr. Corbett) it has been estimated that over 2,000,000 tons of salt have been extracted from the Droitwich and Stoke marls within the last twenty years. A vast export trade is carried on with America, Belgium, and other countries. Ceaselessly, from year's end to year's end, the brine is pumped up from the earth and evaporated by the very simple process which can any day be witnessed at Droitwich or Stoke works. A regular fleet of canal boats is constantly engaged in the transit of salt to all parts of the kingdom, while the railway companies carry an equal quantity away from the town.

An amusing episode has been related in the history of the Droitwich salt-mining operations. It has been stated that the brine springs yield a never-failing supply throughout the year. At one time, however, some serious failure was noticed by the proprietors in their springs, and for a long period no satisfactory reason could be suggested for the continued falling off. At last the matter was solved. A man in the neighbourhood, with some experience in mining, had sunk a shaft at some distance from the salt wells, and had, after a nice calculation, succeeded in running a lateral tunnel to a point which tapped the regular source of the Droitwich wells. The result was obvious, and after vainly endeavouring to dispossess the artful rival it was found necessary to buy him out. At a later period the same man repeated the process and had to be a second time bought out; on this occasion stringent stipulations were added to the agreement to prevent a further injury to the salt-works. The matter became a standing joke in Droitwich, and if ever a slight variation was noticed in the

supply of brine the question was at once asked, "Has old —— been at his games again?"

In stating that the supply of brine is abundant we do not mean to suggest that no failure need be ever anticipated. In Cheshire the supply has fallen short, simply because the brine has been extracted at a quicker rate than nature creates the supply. The fresh water must have time to percolate through the rock salt, or the brine in a state of solution cannot be dissolved in the salt cavities. At Droitwich the supply has always been equal to the demand; it is an open question for how long these conditions can be maintained; at the worst a temporary stoppage of the pumps would no doubt give the time requisite for the accumulation of the brine supply.

Hadsor House, the property of the Galton family, is also within a mile of Droitwich, though now in other hands. One day we were puzzled by information conveyed to us by a labourer on the estate. Shaking his head at the idea of the house having been closed and the pictures all taken away, he went on to say that the estate had lately been let "to them Desbits." It was some minutes before it flashed across our minds that "them Desbits" represented a colony of Jesuit refugees from France. Hadsor is now in their hands, permission to enter the park is refused, and strangers can only obtain a glimpse into the grounds on one side, where a lake skirts the beautifully-wooded park. It was a day in October when we stood beside the lake, a splendid barberry tree overhung the still waters, brilliant with scarlet berries reflected clearly in the lake. The grounds are pleasantly undulating, and were originally laid out with consummate skill by Sir Joseph Paxton, the greatest of landscape gardeners. Witley Court, the palatial residence of the Earl of Dudley, is within a drive of Droitwich, being a favourite excursion from the Worcester district, and Hagley, the seat of Lord Lyttelton, can easily be reached by the Great Western line, *via* Hartlebury.

The great historian of Worcestershire, Dr. Nash, was vicar of St. Peter's, Droitwich, a man eminent as an archæologist, and whose history of the county remains a most valuable work. If report speaks truly, however, he was somewhat unscrupulous with regard to his own church tower, which has been repaired with red brick in place of the upper stone-work, it is said, by Dr. Nash. Not only this has been done, but if we look on the barn gables standing behind the black and white timber house which was the Vicarage in Dr. Nash's time, it will be seen that the stone-work on the barn roof has been taken from the church tower. We have been told in Droitwich that it is a fact that the reverend doctor and archæologist, when he required to repair his barn used his church tower in place of a stone-quarry; hence he was obliged to build up his tower with brick. There were many strange transactions with regard to church property about 100 years ago.

Much of the valuable old silver plate disappeared in some wonderful manner from the churches of the county. Some authorities say that in the great country houses the best specimens should now be looked for.

The timber house is no longer the Vicarage house, but belongs to the farm. An old inhabitant of Droitwich communicated to us some reminiscences of festive parties at this house in his youth. In those days they mulled port wine in a huge open cauldron suspended from an iron hook in the wide chimney, the guests all clustering round the open hearth. Probably these convivial evenings had some connection with a palpable limp which we noticed our informant had—even a Droitwich resident in the midst of the healing brine is not proof against gouty twinges.

Over the doorway of St. Peter's church we noted the singularly apt text, "Remember Lot's wife." If the only intention was to prevent people turning away from the church door, it is a little singular that so palpable reference to the local industry should be thus employed in the Biblical warning.

Before leaving the subject of St. Peter's church we cannot refrain from noticing the admirable fruit garden possessed by the present vicar of the parish; it is indeed a model garden, proving how much may be accomplished by an experienced gardener. It is his theory (in our opinion founded on fact) that in country villages the rent of the house and garden may be paid by the industrious occupier through his garden produce.

On the road from St. Peter's parish to Droitwich the Coventry Almshouses will be noticed. The origin of the charity—if report speaks truly—was strange. The ancestors of Lord Coventry and Lord Hampton had a wager. It was agreed that the loser should build and endow a certain number of almshouses in Droitwich, such institution to bear the name of the winner. As Lord Coventry gained the wager, it remained for the Pakington family to carry out the above agreement: it is said that the Westwood estate has an annual charge upon it to this day for the charity. We believe that the inmates, equal numbers of old men and women, are eligible under certain conditions, one of which is that applicants must be natives of Droitwich.

The borough of Droitwich is one which has lost its identity by the operation of the new Franchise Act. Times have changed indeed since the generation that returned two members for Droitwich. There were few electors, perhaps a couple of dozen at the outside, but they were treated right royally by the candidates. There are still records of dinners served to the electors, with accounts for the same, stating an allowance of two bottles of port was given to each diner—a note adding that three men too ill to attend had dinner and wine sent to their homes by the hospitable hosts. The period referred to would be before the '32 Reform Act.

One of the most fearful series of crimes which was ever partially revealed was enacted at the village of Oddingley, near Droitwich, in the year 1806, remaining a mystery until 1829.

After living for several years on bad terms with his leading parishioners, chiefly through the question of tithes, the Vicar of Oddingley was brutally murdered in his own grounds. Two chance pedestrians heard the cry of "Murder," and actually witnessed a man assailing the unfortunate clergyman with the butt end of a gun, after having shot at and wounded his victim. Having killed the poor man, the villain attempted to escape, but was seized by one of the witnesses. Drawing out a pistol, however, the murderer managed to intimidate his pursuers and thus made good his escape. Sufficient evidence having been obtained for identification, a search was instituted for the fugitive, whose name and occupation in the village were perfectly well known. The evening of the same day he had been seen lurking about Oddingley Woods, but from that moment the most active search failed to discover the wretched man; he was never seen again, and the whole affair remained an unsolved and mysterious crime.

After the lapse of many years some strange rumours gained the public ear in the neighbourhood, gradually assuming a more definite form and leading to further inquiry.

It was roundly asserted that the murderer of the clergyman had never escaped to America, as had been generally believed; that he had been a hired assassin, and that he had in his turn been murdered and buried under a certain clover stack in a barn by those who had employed him.

The motive of the second murder was of course easily understood, if murder it should prove to be—the employers were fearful of discovery through the arrest of their agent. In 1830 these rumours became so far substantiated that a search in the barn was ordered. A strange confirmation of the vague allegations resulted from this search. A skeleton was discovered almost entire, with shoes and a carpenter's rule; the teeth were also perfect. The widow and brother-in-law of the murderer and murdered man identified the remains by the teeth, shoes, and rule (the man had been a carpenter). The skull was fractured, being smashed into more than twenty pieces. The fact of a second murder having been committed was established, and disposed of the rumour of the escape of the criminal to America. An inquest on the skeleton remains was at once ordered, resulting in the committal of three men on the charge of wilful murder, and of a fourth as "accessory to the murder before the fact." This verdict was probably obtained through the confession of one of the three men as to the facts of the second crime. This confession involved another leading character in this ghastly business, probably the originator and chief instigator of the original murder of the clergyman. This man had died in the previous year at the age

of ninety-six. All the men implicated in the matter were liable for the vicar's tithes.

The following were the main facts of the confession.

The author stated that he had been unknowingly induced to witness the murder of the carpenter in the barn. One of the assembled party (there were five persons present) struck the unfortunate murderer with a "blood-stick" on the head; he was killed instantaneously and buried in the barn by those assembled.

On the following day witness received some sums of money from the hands of the chief instigator (who had since died), with an intimation that it was hush-money originally intended for the carpenter-murderer.

It should be stated that the man who died in 1829 at the age of ninety-six had lived a most miserable life since the Oddingley murder. He had shut himself up, refused admittance to almost everybody; remorse preyed on his mind; he was restless, agitated, and suspicious, and is reported to have had strange fancies that he saw the murdered man before him, crying out, "Take him away." He died in mortal agony, with all the appearances of a guilty conscience. He was buried in St. Peter's churchyard, Droitwich. (We have seen the name inscribed on a stone slab, and a note in the register confirming the fact of his burial.) Had the wretch lived another year a miscarriage of justice would have been easily averted.

The great trial of the accomplices was held at the Worcestershire Lent Assizes, 1830, before Mr. Justice Littledale. After a trial which brought forth full and most extraordinary evidence, the jury returned a verdict against the first prisoner of "Guilty as an accessory after the fact," and being further pressed by the judge to reconsider the question as to whether the prisoner was guilty of felony and murder, or not guilty, a verdict of "Not guilty" was returned; the prisoners were therefore all liberated.

The under sheriff received the following intimation from the clerk of assize. After naming the prisoners, he stated:

"Standing indicted as accessories to a murder, but the principal felon not having been tried, and being now dead, and the prisoners therefore declining to plead, they are to be discharged."

Thus the three men became free, while the main facts of the tragedy were made public.

The last survivor has but recently died. Popular opinion ran high at the time of the funeral of this man as to whether his body should be allowed Christian burial. Eventually the clergyman buried the body in the church-yard; no court of law had convicted any one of the murder, therefore no grounds existed for refusing a Christian burial.

The facts of the case, however, were fully established. A league of tithe-payers hired the carpenter to murder the obnoxious clergy-

man. They afterwards murdered their agent to remove possible evidence against themselves.

The chief instigator died before evidence had accumulated for his arrest—twenty-four years elapsed between the murders and the trial. It is probable the rumours which led to the final inquiry arose from some words spoken by the same partially-guilty man who was afterwards arrested with others, and made a confession to the authorities. Undoubtedly the actual murderer was dead, and those arrested were accessories to the crime; no evidence could convict them of the absolute murder of the carpenter.

Full details of the inquest and trial were published by Eaton, of Worcester, in 1830, in a book called "The Oddingley Murder," in which every point is carefully described in one of the most extraordinary murder cases which ever came before a court of justice.

C. P.

A SICK MAN TO HIS MEDICINE BOTTLE.

THOU art not beautiful. In fact, the sight
 Of thy squat figure, always on my table,
 Well corked, and tipped with sealing wax so bright,
 Affects me so, that, really, I'm unable
 To tell, in words appropriate, my feeling,
 As, hopelessly, I strive with might and main
 Those to forget, 'gainst which there's no appealing,
 Which bid me swallow what thou dost contain.
 Ay, Bottle, there's a shield upon thy side
 Bearing the chemist's name in letters gay,
 And, writ in ink, between the lines abide
 Directions for the dose—"Three times a day."
 I ask thee, Bottle, how, if thou art such,
 Can I e'er love thee, love thee well? Not much.

And yet, poor Bottle, canst thou help thy shape?
 'Tis surely not thy fault that thou art squat.
 Hurl we our blame against the grinning ape,
 The knave who blew thee from the furnace hot.
 Thy makers did not care to blow thee white,
 But left mysteriously a shade of blue,
 To give a whimsical, unhallowed light,
 And add a ghostly pallor to thy hue.

No, Bottle, from the first thou hast not well
Been treated. Only made for task most humble ;
And at thy presence, easy 'tis to tell,
Few patients will rejoice, but many grumble.
Oh, Bottle ! If the state of things be such,
Canst thou feel pleasure ? I should say, not much.

Think of the nauseous draughts with which they fill
Poor, unoffending thee, my blueish Bottle,
And send thee off to some one who is ill,
To pour thy vile contents adown his throttle.
Does that poor sick man love the sight of thee,
Or hail thee as a vision of delight ?
Or prays he that thy form he ne'er may see
Again, with figure squat and label trite ?
To be unpopular is thy sure fate,
For thy contents are very rarely nice.
The old ones shun thee, while the young ones hate
The sight of thee as—puddings made of rice.
Alas, poor Squat One ! Things thou know'st are such,
So, canst thou wonder at our hate ? Not much.

But, cheer up, Bottle, thou shalt have thy due
From ev'ry one who has the sense to think.
What if thy colour be a doubtful blue ?
Thou holdest physic for the sick to drink.
Thy nauseous liquors oft bring back to life
The weak and dying, who, but for thy aid,
Would sink exhausted in unequal strife
Against the ravages their ills have made.
But thou, oh Bottle, helpest to restore
To suff'ring patients their much longed-for health,
That boon Ben Jonson has described of yore,
*“ The rich man's blessing and the poor man's wealth.”
Yes, Bottle blue and squat, the case is such—
And, can I hate thee now ? Indeed, not much.

CHARLES HELMORE.

* “ Oh health, health ! the blessing of the rich ! the riches of the poor ! Who can purchase thee at too dear a rate ? ”

BEN JONSON, “ Volpone,” act II. sc. 1.

BAYREUTH IN 1876 AND 1886.

BAYREUTH has celebrated this year the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of the Wagner Theatre. To the superstitious it seemed from the outset as though some fateful import attached to the festival occasion. The performances were to open on the 23rd of July. On the evening of the 22nd a storm of unexampled violence burst over the province of Franconia. Houses were unroofed, factory chimneys thrown down, trees felled by the hundred, hail, lightning, and hurricane between them working such earthquake-like devastation in some places that the terrified inhabitants thought the end of the world was at hand. But the morning of the 23rd, at Bayreuth, dawned fair and fine, as the expected enormous concourse of visitors, German, French, English, and American, came flocking into the town in eager anticipation of the festival. Yet even then the first news that greeted them, the first sounds that fell on their ears were of a funereal, not a festive nature. The intelligence of the death of Scaria, one of the most popular and sympathetic of Wagner opera singers, whose admirable performances of Hans Sachs in the "Meistersinger" at Drury Lane are still fresh in the memory of the London public, had just arrived to cast a shadow over the sunshine of the occasion. And the peal of the church bells, rung daily in commemoration of the death of the king whose munificence contributed so materially to the furthering of Wagner's enterprise, was hardly needed to recall the so recent tragedy of his fate. Still, all were far from thinking that this tribute of mourning for an illustrious prince, which was to be discontinued a few days later, scarce ended, the town would be thrown into mourning for a greater name, a more honoured guest.

Conspicuous among the audience that gathered in the theatre on the evening of Friday the 23rd to witness a performance of "Parsifal," said never to have been surpassed and rarely equalled within these walls, was Franz Liszt, the veteran composer, from whom we so lately parted in England. On the Sunday following he again attended the theatre, to hear "Tristan und Isolde," though manifestly unfit for the exertion. In a week from that time he was lying dead in the house adjacent to his daughter, Madame Wagner's residence, having just lived to witness the latest triumph of his son-in-law's genius in the undiminished attraction and success of the two great works mentioned above.

People with good memories and no objection to carrying them so far back as the summer of 1876 and the opening of the Bayreuth theatre, will not have forgotten the very mixed sentiments excited by the event beforehand in the public mind—the doubt, the perplexity, the wonder, the incredulity, the ridicule. Even the faithful, the blindest Wagner worshippers had their secret misgivings in their hearts' depths as to the success of so novel and bold an enterprise, something so untried, so new, so unconventional. A theatre, itself constructed on a totally unfamiliar plan, located at Bayreuth, an out-of-the-way place some hours by rail from any capital city, furthermore the placing of the opera house a mile out in the country—scenery extraordinary, the pick of German singers and orchestral players, an audience of 2,000 persons—here were but a few of the distinctive features of the scheme. It was magnificent, but it was absurd, impossible, a self-intoxicated artist's dream. It came to pass, however, the "impossible" was achieved, the dream fulfilled, and the brilliant success of the Bayreuth performances, repeated again and again during the decade, has carried their fame through the world, and any talk of abandoning them as too costly or troubous is, in Germany at least, instantly cried down as something too bad to be true.

Wagner had the courage of his inspirations, and his immense confidence has reaped a proportionate reward. Having created his model opera house, especially for the performance of his famous trilogy, "The Nibelungen Ring," he proceeded to create "Parsifal," especially for this opera house. The sacred character of "Parsifal," whether or not it be found in the future to preclude its performance elsewhere, sets it entirely apart from all other modern lyric dramas, not excepting those of Wagner himself. It appears—as it was—composed expressly for such conditions as, at present, exist at Bayreuth alone. And "Parsifal," as there performed, is not merely free from any feature that would shock the most sensitive religious minds. It is hardly too much to say that to these only can it thoroughly appeal, in its unearthly, entirely elevating character and austere purity. The existence of "Parsifal" is an artistic fact which of itself is sufficient *raison d'être* for the continuance of the Bayreuth theatre. "The Nibelungen Ring" has now been performed on most of the leading lyric stages, both in and out of Germany; "Parsifal," hitherto, at Bayreuth alone; and the longer Madame Wagner persists in her resolution of forbidding its representation elsewhere, the better for the artistic world, since it guarantees the repetition, at intervals, in the chosen city, of those performances whose singular excellence has silenced all previous objectors to the drama on account of its peculiar nature. The parallel of the Ober Ammergau play has been often quoted. It was the simple, naïve faith of the Ammergau peasants which precluded the thought of irreverence

in connection with their performance. Here a high artistic spirit, in itself akin to religion, is the safeguard, inspiring the performers, reacting on the audience, keeping vulgar instincts in check ; and the influence of this feeling, which spreads to all and manifests itself in numberless ways, is not the least remarkable feature of this remarkable art festival.

A century ago Bayreuth was rich and famous as the seat of the Brandenburg Margraves, whose palaces and pleasure grounds still adorn the town and its neighbourhood. But its eighteenth-century grandeur had faded away for ever, and in this democratic and industrial age it had settled down into a sort of comfortable, dignified, dowager-like genteel obscurity, with no possible future, apparently, before it but respectable dulness. When ten years ago it sprung into a new and undreamed of notoriety, no one was more taken aback, more put out by the honour than Bayreuth itself. Well we remember, when the city was first invaded by the stream of tourists, how slow it was to awake to the greatness thus thrust upon it, and to grasp and act upon the fact that a sudden influx of some two thousand souls calls for some extra provision. For the visitor's soul, indeed, a rich feast of music was unquestionably prepared, but for his bodily requirements little or no thought had been taken beforehand by the town, and everybody was at his wits' end to provide for the emergencies that very naturally arose. In the first days the singers themselves ran some risk of being famished, whilst the traveller, ravished with their song, had to learn not even to dream of supper. It is needless to say that in ten years Bayreuth has become used to its popularity, and learnt how to turn it to commercial account. No stranger now there abiding need want for any needful thing. It has accepted its strange new lot as a modern shrine of pilgrimage. It has accepted Wagner as ruling divinity. It is the only town in Germany where you are allowed awhile to forget Bismarck and the Emperor, nay, even Goethe and Schiller. Wagner here overshadows all ; his stamp is everywhere and on everything. The very postcards here sold bear his effigy or a sketch of his theatre on the hill. The notepaper you buy has for a superscription the "scarf *motif*" from "Tristan" or the "flower maidens' *motif*" from "Parsifal." His bust, his photograph, picture-scenes from his operas, and art mementos of like description supply materials for a complete branch of trade, upon which the Bayreuth shopkeepers thrive—not to mention the enormous flood of Wagner literature, continually on the increase. The first morning pilgrimage made by every visitor who comes hither is to the grave of the man who has conferred this singular kind of eminence on the town. We stroll into the gardens—now a public promenade—of the former palace of the Margrave of Brandenburg and of his wife, Frederick the Great's sister, but it is neither of the sprightly Wilhelmine nor even of the illustrious

Fritz that we are thinking as we tread the shady park-like retreat, with its stately avenues of ash trees, and long strips of water overshadowed by thick boughs, the whole not too carefully kept, and inviting pleasantly to rest and meditation. From one of the side avenues a gate communicates with the consecrated piece of ground, behind the gardens of Wagner's villa, which he set apart during his life-time as a burying place for himself. The approach is through a thick little grove of cypresses and spruce firs, the pathway leading to a railed-off inclosure planted round with sycamores and beeches; in their midst the tomb—a vast, low-lying grey marble slab, without inscription, set in a wide frame of luxuriant ivy. What more natural than that he should desire to rest here, almost in the shadow of the dwelling place where he had passed the last ten years of his life, the years during which he had seen the attainment of those objects long scouted by the world as visionary, but to whose fulfilment he had strenuously devoted his whole existence.

The changes wrought by prosperity are rarely, we suppose, all for the better, and the visitor returning to Bayreuth after a ten years' absence will note some he will regret. The quaintness and simplicity that formerly characterized the place have gone for good. Enlightenment fosters curiosity, and the staring crowd of inquisitive idlers of the lower classes that throngs the precincts of the opera house, as similar loungers do in London, no longer permits of the refreshing impression of seclusion, the restful fresh-air stroll during the *entr'actes*, which compensated the opera-goer for the long trudge up the hill. Nor is mere harmless curiosity the only attraction that draws the mob hither. It is a matter of business with some. On the first night of the series an Englishman was robbed of a pocket-book containing bank notes of considerable value. In justice to the German police it should be added that the thief was since arrested at Nürnberg, and a portion, actually, of the money recovered. Others whose purses and watches have gone astray have been less fortunate; and altogether the disagreeable crowd that is allowed to collect around the theatre constitutes an annoyance against which the management might do more to guard.

The distinctive feature of this summer's festival has been the production, for the first time at this theatre, of "Tristan und Isolde." Some doubt was felt beforehand as to whether any special effect could be obtained with so familiar a work; but the doubt was speedily removed. The representation of this opera on July 25, the second night of the festival, the occasion of Liszt's last visit to the "Temple," as Wagner's family name the opera house, will not soon be forgotten by those who had the good fortune to be present. Said an enthusiastic critic afterwards, "I have heard 'Tristan' eight times, on the principal German stages, but to-night for the first time I have heard the

real, the veritable 'Tristan' that Wagner wrote." There is no doubt that the artistic exaltation, the keen interest these representations inspire, spur the performers to such lavish exertion of their powers as would not be possible to them on ordinary or oft recurring occasions. The two leading *rôles* were filled respectively by Vogl, the Munich tenor, and Frau Sucher—probably the best Tristan and Isolde on the stage. Both are known in London, the former by his admirable representation of Siegfried, in the "Ring der Nibelungen," whilst the latter appeared as Isolde on the occasion of the first introduction of that opera to the English public, in 1882. The minor parts were filled with a rare fidelity to the author's intent. Here is no striving on the part of any one artist to outshine another; the efforts of all, from the greatest to the least, being directed to one aim, the most complete and effective attainable presentation of the whole. A word on the scenic art at Bayreuth, from which we in England might take a lesson. How is it that in our theatres, where no sacrifice is grudged to *spectacle*, and so many costly and marvellous things are done, we yet remain behindhand in results, from the artistic point of view? Surely because our scenic artists are carried away by the desire to produce something startling and elaborate, some ingenious, surprising mechanical device, at the expense of such mightier matters as beauty and fitness. We are startled, dazzled, confused, distracted—but this is low art. The decoration is generally overladen, the scene too crowded, more is presented than the eye can take in with ease, and the result is to hinder rather than to help the sense of dramatic illusion. At Bayreuth, artistic beauty and appropriateness are the ends aimed at; and the outcome to the spectator is first a sense of enjoyment, secondly, of increased participation in the dramatic action; which our spectacular artists of the fireworks school, thinking chiefly of exhibiting a *tour de force* on their own account, often do their best to break.

Thus, in "Tristan und Isolde," the grouping of the figures on board the ship, of the trees that form the leafy screen behind Isolde's bower, the bit of rugged sea coast, where Tristan's faithful attendant watches by his death bed, were marvels of the picturesque. So in "Parsifal," the two great scenes—the hall of the Grail, as it were some old round church of the Templars, with its stately Corinthian columns, arcades round the dome and starry vault above; and secondly, the magic gardens of the enchanter Klingsor's palace, a maze of fantastic flowers, a frame for the still more fantastic flower maidens—were two contrasting pictures, each absolutely satisfactory of its kind—a beautiful and fitting setting for the dramatic action, without exaggeration or over elaboration of detail.

That "Parsifal," Wagner's last work, is also his finest, there can, we think, be little doubt. Had the composer left no other

trace behind him than this it must have placed him where he now stands; and those still unacquainted with it can have but an incomplete estimate of the extent of Wagner's genius. Its simplicity is not its least remarkable feature, and a very little previous study should enable the listener, though of slight musical pretensions, to follow it intelligently throughout. Of its dramatic effect no study or concert rendering of the music can afford even a distant idea. Here is surely the apotheosis of lyric and dramatic art, and never did an artist consecrate his high faculties to more ennobling intent. To those who have not seen the work such praise must appear exaggerated; but among all who have attended its performance at Bayreuth there prevails an entire unanimity of opinion. It has been repeatedly described, but to little purpose. Descriptions depend, for lucidity and suggestiveness, on some idea of comparison between the thing described and some other thing. "Parsifal," as a lyric drama, is unique and incomparable—and, to artists, a revelation—one of those invaluable additions to the wealth of the world—the world of poetry—whose occurrence is rarest in history. The figures in the drama, though no invention of Wagner's, have by him been endued with new life. Parsifal, the stainless knight; Amfortas and Kundry, the types of suffering, erring, repentant humanity, though allegorical personages, are as real and vivid as Ariel and Caliban, as Undine, Galatea, or any other of those poetical creations, impossible as human beings, but truthful representations in a moral, a figurative sense. Each has been powerfully represented by different artists, each presenting some special personal feature of excellence, and each of whom it would be invidious to praise, at the expense of his rival. But a word of special tribute seems claimed for Fraulein Malten's Kundry—as of exceptionally striking excellence—one of those original and seemingly inspired impersonations that remain in the memory for ever. Impossible, nay, undesirable though it may appear, that a drama so essentially religious in character as "Parsifal," and dealing with the most sacred mysteries of the Christian faith, should ever be reproduced in an ordinary theatre amid the mixed conditions of the modern stage, it is still more impossible that so marvellously beautiful and impressive a work should ever be allowed to be shelved for long—a fact that must be faced in the future. The solution for the present lies in the continuance of the performances at Bayreuth—devoutly to be wished for in the interests of dramatic art. So long as they maintain their present level of excellence their success should be certain. It is proposed next year to repeat "Parsifal," and to perform for the first time at Bayreuth the popular "Meistersinger." This representation of works already familiar on other stages is a new feature at the Wagner Theatre, but in full accordance with the founder's original design — here to supply the world with pattern—

ideal—performances ; to show it what opera ought to be, and might be. All honour to the man who conceived and carried out an artistic undertaking as noble and admirable as art's recent annals can supply, and whose triumphant success, in this so-called age of prose and positivism, it is regenerating to contemplate.

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

I.

OUR talk was thrilled with tenderness,
 As we wander'd all alone,
 Faint echoes came of happiness,
 As water whisp'ring 'neath a stone,
 Half lost except to cunning ears,
 Yet ever running through the live-long years.

II.

But far more often were we gay,
 Half quarrelling in love,
 As though what jesting dare not say,
 Feign'd anger might half hinting prove,
 By reconciling us again,
 Drawing us closer after every strain.

III.

And closer still our hearts were knit,
 Yet neither dared to own ;
 She'd not the will, nor I the wit,
 To take what was already won.
 I dallied—only won to lose,
 And having made my choice, I could choose.

L'ENVOI.

Even as a rose-tree drooping,
 Deeply mourns its stolen blossom ;
 So my soul with sorrow stooping,
 Wails the love reft from my bosom :
 Still the rose-tree shall in gladness,
 Bear fresh blossom as of yore ;
 But my heart in bitter sadness,
 Aloe-like shall never more.

A WEST SUSSEX RAMBLE.

SUSSEX, to most Londoners, means Brighton, Hastings, and the other coast watering-places, or as much of the country as can be seen from the windows of a train dashing at the rate of forty miles an hour. It seems to occur to a very small percentage of such visitors, especially to those who remark the great beauty of the country seen by glimpses between the tunnels, that a few days might be profitably spent in exploring it, so that Sussex may fairly claim to be a much neglected and even much maligned county; and inland Sussex may be said to be despised simply because the Queen of Watering-places happens to be situated in the midst of a country which, however invigorating and wild, cannot be said to appeal very forcibly to lovers of the picturesque and beautiful. Yet Sussex is as fully deserving of attention as many another county beloved of tourists. There are spots about it not to be excelled in beauty elsewhere. It has a history and a romance of which many another more frequented district would be proud. There is ample railway communication through all parts of it; and the Sussex roads have long since redeemed their ancient reputation of being the worst in the kingdom.

Determined to explore a country so little known to the greater part of that vast, thirsty mass ever clamouring for fresh woods and pastures new, we start from East Grinstead on a two days' tramp, which will take us by all the unfamiliar features of interest in western Sussex, with the determination to pursue our journey eastwards on a future occasion should the present prove auspicious.

East Grinstead once returned two members to Parliament, and was of even greater local importance than is Horsham now; but the Reform Bill cut away East Grinstead's members, trade went to Horsham, and it looked as if her days were numbered. Greater London and growing Brighton came to her rescue, so that now, although there is tranquillity and old-worldishness in the High Street of East Grinstead to satisfy the most ardent lover of the past, the place has become a favourite resort of Londoners and Brightonians, and in a few years' time we may look in vain for substantial evidence of her old importance, although it will be much longer ere the wild and original character of the country around be tampered with.

We take the road leading south-west from the town, which runs, after a few descents and climbs, on a ridge of hill commanding beautiful views on right and left hand respectively of the

Surrey country as far as the hills, and of the Sussex weald as far as the South Downs. Passing under the railway, we get to the hamlet of Turner's Hill, standing upon one of the old Brighton roads through Lindfield, and, leaving the splendid farm buildings in course of erection for Mr. Whitehead of torpedo fame on our left, follow the road to Half Smock Corner, where stands a lowly roadside inn called the "Norfolk Arms," cross it, and turn down a beautiful but very straight lane leading to Balcombe. Of course there is cultivation here and other signs of the times, but enough remains to tell us that in days long gone by this was a wild, sequestered neighbourhood, the approach to which was dreaded by those whom legitimate business brought here, and the character of which—dense groves of beech trees, thick heather and cover, dark, sunless lanes—was all that could have been prayed for by those who undoubtedly would have lived honestly if they could, but who intended to live at all hazards. Old traditions and customs have died as easy a death in Sussex as in most other parts of rural south England, but the old fellows hereabouts in the neighbourhood of the Balcombe tunnel, lounging over their garden gates or sipping out of mugs in dark little inns, tell us strange stories of the country ranging between here and the Devil's Punch Bowl on Hindhead. Circumstantially such stories must of course be taken with a large grain of salt, but, upon the principle that where there is smoke there is fire, we may form some notion of the state of matters here even within the memory of not remarkably aged men from the general character of the stories; and very few people out of Sussex can form a notion of the simply hideous life which was led by the natives during the last years of the Sussex iron industry.

However, it is all peaceful and quiet enough now, and Nature reigns monarch supreme, clad in her most beautiful garments, where men, if they were not iron puddlers were smugglers, and, in either case, thorough-paced blackguards; and we trudge on under the shade of splendid beech trees, until we strike the best known of the Brighton roads—that which goes through Cuckfield, and along which the yellow wheels of the phaeton of the "First Gentleman in Europe" must have thundered many scores of times—at the exceedingly ugly village of Hand Cross.

However, here there is a typical old-fashioned roadside hostelry, well known to modern coach travellers as the "Red Lion," where, in a panelled room of which the chief ornament is a picture representing "The Famous Cricketers of England," all of whom are as like one another as are Sir Peter Lely's beauties in Hampton Court Palace, we are substantially and excellently regaled.

From Hand Cross we pursue our road south-west. The wildness of the scenery is temporarily exchanged for a primness and neatness which tells of the proximity of innumerable country seats, and we pass by trim hedges—one of rhododendron in full bloom

—cosy lodges embowered in blossom, smooth lawns, and palings spick and span as they are never seen out of England. Three miles on we reach Lower Beeding, where is a church, not remarkable in itself, but pleasantly situated amidst old-world cottages, which make a good page in a sketch-book. Turning now southwards, we pass two or three of those old manor houses, now principally converted into farms, which abound in Sussex and southern Surrey, all of the same period and character, long, low, with massive stacks of twisted chimneys, red brick gables, rooms with deep windows, cavernous chimney corners garnished with "dogs" and back plates of old Sussex iron, and beamed with wood-work which would make a modern house runner-up blush with shame, standing in gardens full of old-fashioned flowers, or half-hidden in orchards, the trees of which are still often wassailed on Christmas Eve, and in return for the rite produce an excellent cider. Away to our left we see the gables and tower of the big monastery at Cowfold, the abode of a fraternity of what the natives call "Frenchy monks," members of which are to be met with in all directions, conning their breviaries, to the wonder, if not the suspicion, of the yellow-haired young natives. Further on we reach a cluster of cottages and an inn known as "Crab Tree." About this inn there hangs a story of the old iron days, which we give as related to us without vouching for its historical accuracy. Jimmy Gerrard, who lived at the end of the last century, called himself a charcoal burner, but, good trade as was that of charcoal burning in those days when every village had its forge and its furnace, Jimmy Gerrard depended for quicker returns and surer profits upon his calling as a conveyer of smuggled goods, and between Crab Tree and New Shoreham there was not a farmhouse or cottage but Jimmy Gerrard knew the ins and outs of, he giving the old women tea which had never paid duty in return for accommodation in the shape of an attic or a cellar, and supplying the old men with excellent tobacco in return for the loan of carts and horses to convey his kegs and ankers inland.

The cleverest preventive officers had failed to catch Jimmy Gerrard, although he was believed to have had his neck in the noose at least half-a-dozen times, and Jimmy's exploits grew so bold and open that people believed him to be in league with a certain nameless gentleman. But Jimmy took to drinking, and the preventive men rubbed their hands. One wild December night he was celebrating the successful conveyance of a score of carts from Shoreham by a carouse at the "Crab Tree," and the preventive men, who had been waiting about in the woods for a week, made sure that he was as good as caught. Disguised as honest puddlers, they dropped in one by one and took their drinks at the bar, whilst Jimmy and his cronies were waking the echoes of the parlour with the whistling chorus of the famous old Sussex song about the ploughman, his plague of a wife, and the before-alluded-

to nameless gentleman. Casually the preventives lounged into the parlour, their cutlasses concealed by their coats, their pots in their hands, their pipes in their mouths. Jimmy Gerrard occupied the place of honour in the huge chimney corner, a roaring fire blazed between the dogs, and above it seethed a huge cauldron of water. Jimmy did not stop his whistle, but he took in the situation at once, and hitched up a little nearer the chimney. Suddenly, at a preconcerted signal, the preventive men made a spring at Jimmy; as suddenly there was a tremendous hiss as of water on fire, followed by dense clouds of smoke and steam; but when this cleared away, there was no Jimmy Gerrard to be seen, and the preventive men had to admit that yet once more Jimmy had proved too many for them.

The popular belief was, of course, that Jimmy had called in his nameless friend to his aid, but the preventives knew very well that he had tilted the cauldron on to the flames, and had escaped by the chimney in the confusion which ensued, for he was met at Horsham market a day or two after as cool and unconcerned and bucolic-looking as if he did not know the difference between a keg and an anker.

We proceed, shaping our course almost due south, cross the railway at West Grinstead station, pass West Grinstead Park and all that remains of once powerful Knepp Castle, and along a winding pleasant road of five miles to Ashington. Here we are saved a long *détour* by a native, who leads us over old Ashington Green, where somewhat famous Ashington Fair used to be held, and by a series of paths over sweet-scented fields, tracks along deep lanes, and by wild heather-grown open spaces, brings us out at the top of the hill beneath which lies Storrington.

We had fixed upon Storrington as our halting-place for the night, partly because it was equi-distant from the commencement and termination of our tramp, and partly because we felt assured that it would be a typical, sequestered little Sussex village, with a typical country inn. The "Half Moon" realized our fullest expectations, and although the recommendation of inns is generally a thankless and hazardous proceeding, we feel bound to speak in this case. Storrington, too, seemed quiet and bucolic enough for an hour or two after our arrival; but as we sat smoking our pipes after tea in the parlour, we became impressed, by divers signs and sounds, that we had dropped upon an exceedingly lively little hamlet. Scraps of very recent popular songs were wafted through the window, accompanied by shouts of laughter and a brisk exchange of refined chaff, and presently half-a-dozen young gentlemen, attired in flannels, knickerbockers, and cricket jackets, burst into the room and called loudly for malt. This continued at intervals throughout the evening, the arrival of the young men being varied by the visits of sundry professional-looking foreigners, who took their beer like Britons.

We learned upon inquiry that Storrington had been for many years a pet abode of army tutors, perhaps because its sequestered position and its distance from a railway station are favourable inducements to study; our informant adding that the liveliness now-a-days was nothing to what it used to be when there were eighty young fellows, full of life and health and spirits, distributed amongst the three "crammers."

From Storrington we went the next morning due west, the road running parallel with the South Downs, upon which the old camp at Chanctonbury—the second of the half-dozen West Sussex earthworks—stands out boldly amidst its trees. Passing the cricket field, the church, and the village pond, we leave the road to enter Parham Park, with the idea of seeing one of the finest Elizabethan houses in England, and one of the best private collections of curios and antiquities. However, although the house is at present untenanted, we are told that there is no admission, and are obliged to content ourselves with half-an-hour's stroll beneath the magnificent trees springing amidst a waist-deep undergrowth of fern ere we regain the main road to Pulborough.

From Parham the road ascends over a breezy, heather-clad bit of common, whence a beautiful view over the park trees far away to the South Downs is obtained. Four miles on is Pulborough, where we meet an old friend in the shape of the Roman Stane Street coming from Bignor and Chichester, and proceeding in a straight line *via* Billingshurst and Okewood Hill to Dorking and London. Pulborough is an active, lively place, possessing good inns, much resorted to by anglers, and interesting from the relics of Roman rule which have been found here. It was probably a military station, as there are still distinguishable the remains of a fort, a villa, and of earthworks commanding the basin of the Rother; and we may regard it as a sort of covering fortress to Bignor, the *Ad Decimum* of the Itineraries, as the position of the latter does not appear to have been selected with the customary Roman forethought and strategical skill. From Pulborough we continue in a north-westerly direction along a pleasantly shaded, undulating road towards Petworth. At Stopham Bridge, a fine seven-arched structure across the Arun, there is as pretty a little bit for a sketch as can be found in this country of pretty bits, and Stopham church contains much to interest the lover of mediæval brasses.

Petworth, four miles from Pulborough, is a quiet, straggling old country town, of which the chief attraction is the splendid collection of pictures at Petworth House, remarkable amongst which are the Vandykes and the Turners. In the dining-room are beautiful specimens of Grinling Gibbons' wood-work. From Petworth we follow the park wall, and at four miles' distance strike off to the left through a white gate into Cowdray Park.

After a quarter of an hour's walk across the softest of turf,

shaded by magnificent trees, beneath which browse innumerable deer, we again go to the left, and after crossing a couple of broad meadows, are at the ruins of Cowdray House, once a magnificent rival of Parham, for many years the seat of the Montagues, and accidentally destroyed by fire at the end of the last century. One could pleasantly while away a long summer's morning amongst these magnificent ivy-grown relics of past grandeur, and ruminate in the solitude and calm over the pageants and feastings which they must have witnessed, especially upon the occasion of Queen Bess's visit in 1590. But we have a good half-day's work yet before us, so we content ourselves with a rest and a sketch and pass on into the quaint little village of Cowdray, leaving Midhurst on our left, as there is nothing in the town to warrant our detention. The road strikes due north, up a stiff bit of hill entirely covered with oak and beech forest, but we quit it for a few moments to visit the interesting Perpendicular church at Easebourne—pronounced "Essbourne"—wherein is a splendid monument to that Lord Montague who was at Tilbury on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth's visit to the army there in 1588, and which once stood in Midhurst church, and an alabaster armoured figure of Sir David Owen.

We continue up the hill, but at the summit, instead of following the road, strike down a path to the right in order to cut off a corner, and are on a rudely paved lane, into the origin of which we think it would be worth the while of antiquarians to inquire; for it struck us as being Roman in construction, and might be a continuation of the northern road from Chichester. At any rate we are told that it was a favourite route for smugglers; and we can easily imagine it to have been so, as it is almost hidden in thick foliage, and, indeed, is not perceptible at all from the high road running over the brow of the hill above. We arrive at Fernhurst after rather a hard up-hill walk, and are nothing loth to turn into the inn for a drink and a talk with the village fathers here assembled. They tell us that Fernhurst was the last place in Sussex to abandon the iron industry, and are not to be induced to believe that at Ashburnham the last furnace was only blown out in 1812, and at Rye so late as 1821. There is plenty, however, about Fernhurst to remind us of the old staple industry, not only in the names of places into which the words ash, furnace, hammer, and forge frequently enter, but in more substantial relics in the shape of grate-backs, tombstones and railings which may be noticed in prying about the old houses. Jimmy Gerrard, before alluded to, belonged to this neighbourhood, and a diminutive road-side inn, close by the modern chapel at the commencement of the paved lane by which we came to Fernhurst, is said to have been one of his favourite resorts for the transaction of business.

From Fernhurst to Haslemere, over the Surrey border, there is little of note. At the "Sussex Bells," formerly an inn, we are on both the Hampshire and Surrey borders, and beyond the heights

which loom up in the evening sky to our left, lies the Devil's Punch Bowl and the "Seven Thorns Inn" on the Portsmouth main road, which is said to have been the hostelry in which Nicholas Nickleby made the acquaintance of Mr. Vincent Crummles and his talented troupe of artists.

Generally speaking with regard to pedestrianism in West Sussex, we may say that the roads are very fair, sign-posts plentiful and legible, and the natives most courteous and obliging in spite of the lawless blood which must run in their veins. Hospitality is a pleasant trait in the local character, and we were reminded of Northumberland and Cumberland when we found men taking as an insult the offer of payment for a drink of milk or cider. Sleeping accommodation is rather difficult to find, but there are so many railways traversing this region that by a little careful rehearsal of the route proposed to be taken beforehand, the necessity of passing a night in the out-of-the-way districts may generally be obviated. The men are usually big, fine fellows, and present a striking contrast to the dwarfs over the Surrey border, and we have heard upon good authority that in Northwest Sussex the Roman type of feature is strongly observable, and that our first conquerors left here other traces than roads, earthworks, and tessellated pavements.

MISS ARNE.

SUSANNA MARIA ARNE, a pretty girl of nineteen, with an unusually sweet voice, made her first appearance before a London audience as a singer. Little did pretty Miss Arne, with her foolish, tender heart, her magical eyes, her soft, plaintive notes, her dignity and grace, her passionate, sympathetic, generous nature—little did this impulsive young girl imagine that her beauty, her talent, her youth, her delicately-strung nervous organization, were so many snares to lure her to destruction.

Her brother Thomas, afterwards the famous Doctor Arne, but then only an eager, aspiring young man counting two-and-twenty summers in the years of his life, had determined to become a musician. The father of these ambitious aspirants, Mr. Arne, fashionable upholsterer in a fashionable neighbourhood, had at first vehemently opposed this desire; but finding the youth so vehemently resolved on following his own inclinations, while displaying an undoubted genius for the art and science of music, he had yielded; and then, going to the reverse extreme, began to take a lively interest in the professional schemes and projects of his daughter Susanna. It seems, perhaps, singular that he should have sanctioned her becoming a public singer, as he was a prosperous man, and must have known the manifold dangers which would beset her; but the almost insane passion of the day for music may have seized him, or he may have been tempted by the prodigal sums paid to popular vocalists. A great deal was said of the enormous salaries demanded by operatic performers, and people talked as much of the money gained by singers as they did of their brilliant talents. Then, too, fancy again darts off at a tangent, and conjures up the likelihood that Miss Arne, if not her family, could hardly help thinking how Anastasia Robinson, daughter of a ruined portrait painter, was the intimate friend of one of the most exclusive duchesses in England, and the wife of an ultra-aristocratic earl, although her marriage was still unacknowledged: how Lavinia Fenton, the daughter of a coffee-house keeper's wife, after taking the town by storm as Polly Peachum, had become a duchess: while her successor on the stage, Miss Warren, had married a wealthy gentleman.

No doubt old Mr. Arne knew everybody in connection with the six existing London theatres: the eminent Mr. Handel; crotchety Manager Rich; handsome, rollicking Jack Laguerre, the scene-painter—prince of good fellows—who knew everything and every one; Harry Carey, poet, farce-writer, and musician; Mr.

Lampe, the fashionable composer, who was rapidly making his way to fame and fortune ;—doubtless, Thomas Arne, senior, was acquainted with all the musical and dramatic celebrities of the day.

The stories set before us about Miss Arne's first appearance are vexatiously conflicting, and each needs to be taken with half a dozen grains of salt. Some of the best authorities say that Handel displayed an interest in the young Arnes ; others, equally reliable on points in general, assert that he did nothing of the kind, and that he had reason to be exceedingly annoyed with the family, in consequence of a shabby action perpetrated by them soon after the young lady's *début*.

No candidate ever stepped before the footlights more modestly or with less pretension than Miss Arne. An unobtrusive advertisement was to be seen (1732) in the daily papers, heralding a new opera and new performers in this way :

"At the new theatre in the Haymarket, this present Monday, being the 13th of March, will be performed a new English Opera, after the Italian manner, call'd *AMELLIA*. By a Set of Performers who never yet appear'd in publick. Tickets for the Night may be had at Mr. Fribourg's, Maker of Rappée Snuff, near the Playhouse Gate."

This serious opera in three acts, the scene of which was laid on the frontiers of Hungaria, was composed by John Frederick Lampe, and the words are attributed to Henry Carey. Lampe was just then rising into notice ; he was a German by birth, and early in life had been what he termed "a student of music" at Helmstadt, in Saxony. About 1725 he had come to London, when he was engaged by his friend Handel as a performer on the bassoon in the opera band ; but in 1730, John Rich, of Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, engaged him to compose some dramatic music. Rich was at that time bringing out pantomimes and similar entertainments. Carey—"Harry Carey," he was more generally called—was "a man of a facetious temper," a musician by profession, and "one of the lower order of poets"—the last of the D'Urfey school. So scantily learned was he in his profession, that at first his chief occupation lay in teaching at boarding-schools and in middle-class private families. In composition he could not venture beyond ballad airs or little cantatas, to which he was just able to set a bass. Yet, although he had slight knowledge of the rules of musical composition, he was very original and very prolific. A claim was put forth by his son that to him belonged the honour of composing the National Anthem. He rattled off popular songs with a wonderful facility. One of his most admired ballads was "Sally in our Alley"—a real English song in music, words and sentiment : it obtained praise from Addison for the words, and from Geminiani for the music. Two or three short dramas which he wrote were well received. His principal talent consisted in humour and good-natured satire. While not profiting much by professional training, he had received ex-

cellent instruction from the three most eminent professors of the day—Linnaert, Roseingrave, and Geminiani. Part of his musical studies were gone through with Lampe, whose talents he sincerely admired, and the two men constantly worked together. Lampe said afterwards that all the musical teaching bestowed on Carey did not enable him to "put a bass to his own ballads." Carey was an illegitimate son of George Savile, Marquis of Halifax, by whose family he was granted an annuity till the unhappy day of his death. Nobody knew precisely when he was born—about 1696 it was supposed; but in 1715 he brought out his first two farces, when young Thomas Arne was a child only five years old.

Miss Arne at once secured a triumph, and "Amelia" not only achieved entire success at the time, but was always regarded as Lampe's best work. On March 28th it was announced for the benefit of Miss Arne, "to begin exactly at six o'clock," tickets to be obtained at Mr. Arne's shop, the Crown. On April 8th, having been deferred from Monday to Friday, on account of Miss Arne's indisposition, it was given "with some additional songs by Miss Arne." It was performed for the last time that season for the benefit of Mr. Carey, being on this occasion played at seven o'clock. During these performances it was expressly stated that no persons would be admitted behind the scenes. The managers were trying to make a firm stand against the old practice of loungers crowding the stage; but it was a wearisome struggle. Young fops and old beaux used the stage as if it were a fashionable drawing-room, and made no scruple of walking across it in the middle of a scene to speak to one another.

It was acknowledged by all that Miss Arne was a very pleasing singer, though her ear and judgment were both deficient. Her voice was naturally plaintive and melodious. "She captivated every ear by the sweetness and expression of her voice in singing," says Dr. Burney. There was then, as in after years, a great difference of opinion on her claims to beauty. Some said that in person she was "perfectly elegant," others that she was really unattractive. But Nature had endowed her with such symmetry of form and fine expression of face, that she preserved her youthful aspect even to middle life. "Her features, though not beautiful, were delicate and very expressive," says Miss Seward.

Two months after Miss Arne's first appearance a "little idea" occurred to her father, which did not redound much to his credit. Just then the English public had a kind of craze for musical performances—Italian operas, English musical dramas, interludes, farces, with every species of concert, were run after. Out of six theatres, four were devoted to music. Of all the musical men of the day, the most admired and popular was Mr. Handel, and any piece written by him would be sure of delighted acceptance at the hands of the public. In 1708, when at Naples, he had composed a trifling work called "Acis and Galatea," and afterwards, when

he was *maestro di capella* to the magnificent Duke of Chandos, at Cannons, he re-wrote this pretty serenata. The English words were written by Gay, assisted by Pope, Dryden, Hughes, and other literary visitors at the duke's hospitable mansion. Gay could play on the flute, and thus was able to write verses for music the more fluently. It was this accomplishment which helped him in his "Beggar's Opera."

This lovely trifle by Handel—"Acis and Galatea"—a holiday task, done for pastime, had never been presented to the public in a dramatic form, and the Arne family considered that it would be an attractive novelty if placed on the stage. As a serenata it had been sung at Lincoln's Inn Fields, in March, 1731, with some additions, such as the parts for Damon and Corydon; but it is not known if Handel himself made these additions. It had on that occasion been performed by Rochetti, Leveridge, Salway, and Legar, Mrs. Wright, Mrs. Carter, and Mrs. Papillon. It was a species of musical drama, and had never been intended for an opera.

Judicious puffing was not neglected in bringing this piece out by surprise. A preliminary paragraph was put forth in the *Daily Post* of May 2nd, 1732: "We hear that the Proprietor of the English Opera will very shortly perform a celebrated Pastoral Opera, call'd *Acis and Galatea*, compos'd by Mr. Handel, with all the Grand Chorus's and other Decorations, as it was perform'd before his Grace the Duke of Chandos at Cannons; and that it is now in Rehearsal." An advertisement followed immediately, announcing, for May 11th, "Acis and Galatea," a "Pastoral Opera," composed by Mr. Handel, to be performed at the "new theatre in the Haymarket." "With all the Grand Choruses, Scenes, Machines, and other Decorations, being the first time it ever was perform'd in a Theatrical Way. The Part of Acis by Mr. Mountier, being the first Time of his appearing in Character on any Stage Galatea, Miss Arne."

However, it proved impossible to prepare the scenes, decorations, and machines in time for the 11th, so the performance was deferred to May 17.

The serenata was given precisely as it had been performed at Cannons. For some reason or another, the speculation did not succeed; the piece seems to have been represented only twice.

Handel was naturally indignant at this really impudent appropriation of his property, and he resolved to bring out his serenata himself, at his own theatre. In the daily papers an advertisement appeared on the 5th of June, announcing that at the King's Theatre "on Saturday next will be perform'd a Serenata, called *Acis and Galatea*, formerly composed by Mr. Handel, and now revived by him with several Additions, and to be performed by a great Number of the best Voices and Instruments. There will be no Action on the Stage, but the Scene will represent, in a Picturesque Manner, a Rural Prospect, with Rocks and Groves, Fountains,

and Grottoes, amongst which will be disposed a Chorus of Nymphs and Shepherds, the Habits and every other Decoration suited to the Subject." The pit and boxes were thrown together, and on the Saturday appointed a warning was added that no persons could be admitted without tickets, which would be "deliver'd this day at the office in the Haymarket, at half a guinea each. No persons whatever to be admitted behind the scenes." The musical additions consisted of many of the airs from the Neapolitan serenata, and three choruses, two in Italian and one in English. The pastoral was "a macaronic" one, being sung partly in Italian, partly in English. Signora Strada was the Galatea, Montagnani, Polyphemus. The English airs, given to the added parts of Clori and Eurilla, were sung by Miss Robinson and Mrs. Davis.

This authorized serenata was performed four times, and in the next season it was given on December 5th, 9th, 12th, and 16th. "And this," remarks Dr. Burney, "seems to have been the origin of Handel's performance of oratorios in still life, and of serenatas and other secular musical dramas, during Lent, *in the manner of oratorios.*"

Handel showed a desire to compose some English musical dramas. He wrote "Alceste," an English opera, but it was never performed. He re-set Congreve's "Semele"; it was not performed when first written, but, set to music by Handel, it was (1743) brought out at the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden. Handel, in fact, composed three English operas, besides writing his interlude, the "Choice of Hercules," which was never performed.

After that shabby speculation old Mr. Arne suddenly disappears from view. When, where, and how he departed this life, there is not a trace of evidence to show. There is no record in the parish registers of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, of his death, nor of his second wife's demise. None of the old magazines or newspapers note his death: he apparently vanished into the eternal silences.

In later years Handel forgave or forgot the unpleasant affair about his serenata, and became a good friend of the brother, young Thomas Arne, while he evinced his appreciation of the sister, pretty Miss Arne, by writing for her the superb air, "He was despised," in his "Messiah." Probably he thought that an eager youthful student of one or two and twenty and a girl of nineteen could not have been very culpable, and he possibly sympathized with the boyish composer, whose early struggles to obtain a mastery of the musical art resembled his own in the most singular manner. Handel's father had sent him to a public school, intending him for the legal profession, and had sternly forbidden him to study music in any shape or form, banishing every kind of musical instrument from the house. Handel had somehow obtained a dumb spinet, the strings being banded with strips of cloth, to deaden the sound —of that species used in the cells of nunneries. He used to play on this in the night-time, in a garret, as young Thomas Arne had

done. And his father had discovered his musical genius almost exactly as the elder Arne had found out his son's wonderful accomplishments.

The success obtained by his sister is alleged to have been a most powerful incentive to Thomas Arne to try his fortune with an "opera." Accordingly, he chose a subject. His literary judgment was never good, and in later years he sometimes, injudiciously, wrote his own words. His first selection was Addison's "Rosamond." Addison, now dead thirteen or fourteen years, may have known the young musician's father, though he implied (*Spectator*, No. 50) that he did not, and spoke of him slightly as "the upholsterer"; but it is doubtful if Thomas Arne, junior, even remembered that silent, disdainful king of a clique.

"Rosamond" had originally proved a bad speculation. Mr. Addison always wanted to stand first wherever he was, and when he heard everybody (1706) talking excitedly about Italian and English operas, he determined to write one. In his opinion, the already existing style of libretto-writing was ineffably absurd, and his chief declared object was to ascertain if polished English verses could be made to harmonize with melody. His friend Captain Steele, manager and dramatist, was a leading man at the theatres, and dashed off brilliant comedies, helped (the captain said) by Mr. Addison, but Mr. Addison desired to shine as a distinct and separate star in the theatrical firmament. Although a poet and a wit, Mr. Addison happened to be profoundly ignorant of music, and had no idea of stage effect. He imagined that because Thomas Clayton had introduced Italian opera to the London world of fashion, and could talk with confidence, he must be the most desirable composer to supply the musical part of the entertainment. The story of Rosamond Clifford seemed a romantic groundwork for a plot; he took it and treated it literally, without any more imaginative effort than enabled him to add a couple of insufferable "funny" people and an insipid page. His chief idea was to flatter the Duke of Marlborough, whom he represented under the guise of King Henry, and lauded to the skies—even brought down imaginary protective angels from thence, to assist in singing the great commander's praises. Lord Macaulay saw fit to eulogize the writing of "Fair Rosamond," but an inferior critic might be led in ignorance to declare that the versification is not above that of a smartly-written modern toy-book. Some of Queen Eleanor's speeches are like a succession of short barks, and her Majesty, like everybody else in the piece, talks at unconscionable length. Rosamond raves in a distressingly exaggerated style, and in short gasps. The best bit is a mildly-droll scene between Sir Trusty and his wife. The opera ends in an abrupt, almost ludicrous manner. Here is a stanza, a fair sample of the entire work. Rosamond, remonstrating with Queen Eleanor, who is presenting to her the dagger and bowl, cries:

" When tides of youthful blood run high,
 And scenes of promis'd joys are nigh,
 Health presuming,
 Beauty blooming,
 Oh, how dreadful 'tis to die ! "

Clayton's music was villainous—a "confused chaos—its only merits being its shortness"; the action of the piece was flat and tame, the poetry uninteresting (some eminent critics say it was graceful, and of a high standard, though some other equally eminent critics condemn it as rubbish), so naturally the result was wretched, mortifying failure, and "Fair Rosamond" was acted only three times when first produced at Drury Lane. With one exception, it was performed by English singers—Mrs. Lindsay, Hughes, Leveridge, Laurence, and others, the part of Rosamond being taken by Signora Maria Gallia. The public were much disappointed: a good deal of fuss had been made about the forthcoming opera, and Addison's name had raised delusive expectations. Addison, horribly chagrined, became henceforth an avowed enemy of Opera under all forms and guises. Only nonsense, he said, was fit to be set to music! However, he did not lose his time flirting with Fair Rosamond. Queen Anne wished to have the book dedicated to her, but he preferred to inscribe it to the more influential Duchess of Marlborough—whereby he excited the subsequent wrath of Dr. Johnson—and this evoked the first gleam of prosperity in the shape of a secretaryship to the Marquis of Wharton, and the situation of keeper of the records in Birmingham's Tower, worth four hundred a year, and this led again to his being put into Parliament by the Marquis of Wharton. Tickell wrote some verses in praise of "Fair Rosamond," and sent them to Addison, whose friendship he thus gained.

When Thomas Arne sat down to re-set this piece, a golden opportunity lay before him. John Rich was eagerly looking for another chance of making a splendid success, to repeat, if possible, the triumph he had achieved five years before (1728), with the immortal "Beggar's Opera." From 1717 to 1720 there were no operas given at any theatre, and the attempts at musical drama in English were but feeble. Owing to many causes, but very much to the incessant ridicule spattered on it by Addison and other writers in the *Spectator*, vocal and instrumental music sank at that time to a low ebb in England. Then the success of the "Beggar's Opera" had electrified native musicians and writers of musical dramas. A cloud of imitative works had started up, like wild-flowers after a refreshing summer shower. No piece had ever plucked a more extraordinary success than the "Beggar's Opera." Not only did society crowd to the theatre to hear and see it, but ladies carried the principal songs and scenes on fans, and had them painted on the screens in their houses. It was played at private theatricals in fashionable drawing-rooms; played in all the chief towns and cities of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland;

played even as a novelty by children at Lincoln's Inn Fields, when a book of the songs was sent by a flying Cupid across the stage to Frederick, Prince of Wales. The original performers at last got fairly tired of it. On the seventy-second night of representation Walker Macheath happened to be slightly imperfect in his part. As he returned from the stage Rich called out to him in his usual rough style, "Halloo, mister, I think your memory ought to be pretty good by this time!" "And so it is," answered Walker, "but zounds, sir, my memory is not to last for ever." During the first run of sixty-two nights the "Beggar's Opera" realized £11,199 14s.

No wonder, then, that other writers desired to glean laurels in the same field; no wonder if Rich cordially welcomed any young composer who seemed to be able to promise pretty dramas and attractive songs. Gay had made an effort to follow up his own trumpet-call. Elated by his intoxicating success, he fancied he could easily achieve another triumph, so wrote a second part to the "Beggar's Opera," which he called "Polly." This opera, fortunately for himself, was never placed on the stage. The Government regarded him with such distrust that they prohibited the piece when it was submitted to the Lord Chamberlain. Had they wished to place weapons in the hands of the dreaded enemy, they could not have adopted a more certain course. The friends and supporters of the poet were so indignant at this tyranny, which they regarded as a persecution, that they had the opera printed, and it was read by everybody. Gay had realized four hundred pounds by the "Beggar's Opera"—he obtained twelve hundred pounds from "Polly." In all probability, had it been played it would have proved a failure, for it did not contain one element of success. It was very badly written, and lacked almost every quality that had rendered the "Beggar's Opera" a magnet to attract good fortune.

The unexpected triumph achieved by the "Beggar's Opera," caused a perfect shower of ballad operas to be rained on the public. The "Cobler's Opera," by Ryan, a somewhat humorous piece; the "Lover's Opera," a ballad farce by Chetwood, the prompter at Drury Lane; the "Devil to Pay"; "Pattie and Peggy," a Scotch ballad opera, by Theophilus Cibber; "A Cure for a Scold," by Worsdale; the "Boarding School"; the "Highland Fair," by Mitchell; "Ulysses," by Smith;—these, with numerous others, were more or less successful. Among the most remarkable of these early English ballad operas was the "Village Opera," written by Charles Johnson, with the music adapted to new words.

"Rosamond," as newly set to music by Thomas Arne, was thus announced in the daily journals:

"At the Theatre Royal in Lincoln's Inn Fields, this present Wednesday, being the 7th day of March [1733], will be performed an English Opera, called

ROSAMOND.

The Words by the late Mr. Addison.

And new set to Musick, after the Italian Manner, by Mr. Arne, Junior.
 King, by Mrs. Barbier; Sir Trusty, Mr. Leveridge; Page, Master Arne, who
 never yet appeared in Publick; Messenger, Mr. Corfe; 1st Angel, Master Arne;
 2nd Angel, Mr. Corfe; Queen, Miss Jones; Rosamond, Miss Arne; Gridoline, Miss
 Chambers. With new SCENES and Dresses.

Boxes, 5s. Pit, 3s. First Gallery, 2s. Upper Gallery, 1s.6d.

To begin exactly at Six o'clock.

Tickets to be had and Places taken at the Stage Door, where Attendance is given."

John Rich, the manager of Lincoln's Inn Fields, had, in conjunction with his brother Christopher, opened the theatre built by their father in 1715. The house was large, and handsomely decorated, the scenes splendid, the stage more extensive than that at Drury Lane, and superbly adorned with looking-glasses on both sides, much to the gratification of the actresses, who, Quin sneeringly said, were more occupied in admiring their own lovely forms than in minding the business of the scene. For some time Rich had struggled against adverse circumstances; he was young, inexperienced, and under the thumb of the leading actors; he hated the people with whom he was obliged to associate; like his father, he desired to make a fortune by French dancers, Italian singers, and monstrosities rather than by native drama. It was suspected that his failure as an actor had given him a distaste for English drama. With the hope of attracting great numbers to the house, he invented a new kind of entertainment, applying himself to the study of pantomimes. He had a genius for machinery, and was a perfect master of everything which related to theatrical effect. As a harlequin, under the assumed name of Lun, he became celebrated. In action he was so wonderfully expressive that words were not needed to signify his meaning. The public were charmed with the new style of entertainment which was created, not imported, by Rich, and he produced scarcely one pantomime which did not run for forty or fifty nights together. Many people objected to the mummeries of the pantomime; but the manager, stingy as he was, found himself well repaid for the hundreds of pounds which he was in the habit of spending on these grotesque exhibitions.

The singers for whom Arne undertook to write, although cold and uncultivated, had begun to improve on their predecessors. Richard Leveridge (for whom Purcell's finest bass songs had been composed) was an excellent singer, and also a poet and musician, his favourite style being comic songs. For the "Indian Princess," altered by Motteux, he supplied several airs of considerable merit. He was not a refined or graceful singer, but was endowed with strength and compass of voice. He estimated his own powers very highly. Upon one occasion he offered for a wager of one hundred guineas to sing a bass song against any man in England. His best known parts were Pluto, Faustus, and Merlin, in the pantomimes brought out by Rich. In manner he was coarse, even vulgar, but a certain free jocularity, and his humorous qualities as a comic

singer, gained for him a welcome at all clubs and male assemblies. So large a circle of friends did he obtain that when he grew old and needy a general subscription, in the form of an annual contribution, was raised by them, sufficient for his wants. About 1726 he opened a coffee-house in Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, and soon after published a collection of his songs in two pocket volumes. By some it is asserted that he aided Lock in writing the music of the second act of "Macbeth." He lived to be almost ninety years of age.

Mrs. Barbier had made her first appearance in Handel's opera of "Almahide"; she had a charming voice, and was a sparkling, black-eyed, modish beauty—"angel when pleased; when vexed, a shrew."

Arne's "Rosamond" was performed ten nights consecutively at Lincoln's Inn Fields, and very much applauded. The music was pretty, and some of the songs were happily set, and were sung in private society. It is hard to say if any copies of this opera are in existence, supposing it ever was published in a complete form.

Miss Arne made so decided an impression in her part that many of her biographers have since imagined that she appeared for the first time on the stage in this opera. Master Richard Arne seems also to have been successful, for he continued to play juvenile characters for about a couple of years. He played (1734) with Macklin and Theophilus Cibber in the "Constant Couple"; Simple, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor"; Tony, in the "Merry Cobler"; Estifania, in "Trick for Trick." He played Estifania on that unfortunate night (May 10th, 1735) when the fatal quarrel about an old wig took place between Macklin and Thomas Hallam, which was followed by Macklin's trial for manslaughter.

This year (1733) was a musical epoch in London. Out of six theatres four were devoted to music: Handel had his "Orlando" at the King's Theatre; Lampe, "Diome" at the "new theatre" in the Haymarket; an unknown composer had "Achilles," written by the late Mr. Gay, at Covent Garden; and "Rosamond" was winning hearts at Lincoln's Inn Fields. A great deal of musical talent had suddenly developed itself, and helped to excite public interest in the divine art. Dubourg, Clegg, and Festing were the most prominent violinists; Kytch was the most noted performer on the hautbois, Jack Festing on the German flute, and Baston on the common flute; Kerba on the bassoon; Valentine Snow (Mrs. Colley Cibber's papa) on the trumpet. There were several organists of repute—Roseingrave, Robinson, Magnus, Greene, Jack Janes, and the young blind Stanley, who was an extraordinary favourite. Some singers had begun to make a name on the English stage, more especially Salway and Mountier, but the latter was chiefly a concert singer.

The principal composers for the English stage about this time were John Christian Pepusch and John Ernest Galliard. Dr. Pepusch presided over the orchestra at Drury Lane: a thoroughly sound theoretical musician, and an industrious composer. The son

of a German Protestant minister, he was born in Berlin in 1667. His father, finding he evidenced great musical talents, gave him an excellent training, by which he profited so well that at fourteen he acquired a reputation for learning and skill. When a little past thirty (about 1700) he came to England, which he never afterwards quitted. The celebrity he gained for being a man of profound science brought him under the notice of the Duke of Chandos, who made him his *maestro di capella*. Subsequently the University of Oxford conferred upon him the honour of a doctor's degree. Although he obtained a fortune of ten thousand pounds with his wife, the ugly, good-tempered, admired opera singer, Signora de l'Epine, he continued to follow his profession. He had undertaken the chief task of arranging and harmonizing the airs in the "Beggar's Opera."

Galliard was the son of a perruquier, and a native of Zurich. He had come to England in the suite of Prince George of Denmark, who had appointed him one of his chamber musicians. In virtue of his engagement with Rich, Galliard was condemned to supply the music to such entertainments as that worthy manager chose to produce, entertainments which were generally a singular admixture of opera and pantomime.

John Laguerre was the chief scene-painter at Lincoln's Inn Fields. He was the son of "old" Laguerre (properly named Louis, because Louis Quatorze was his godfather). Old Laguerre was a French "history painter," who, a lad of twenty, had come over to London in 1683, when he was engaged by Verrio to help him in his decorative work at St. Bartholomew's Hospital. King William gave him lodgings at Hampton Court. He had become an eminent decorative artist; then his career was suddenly ended by a fit of apoplexy, which seized him in Drury Lane Theatre (April 20th, 1721), where he had gone to be present at his son's benefit. He had originally been intended for the Church, but an impediment in his speech hindered him from adopting that profession. Jack Laguerre was born in London, and educated as an artist by his father. Having worked for some time with Hogarth, the caricaturist, he discovered that he had a good voice, and tried the stage, appearing at Lincoln's Inn Fields and at Covent Garden. "He wanted application, not talent," pithily observes one of his biographers. "He was a knowing fellow, known to every one worth knowing, a great humorist, singer, mimic, and wit, the founder of a school of caricaturists." Poor fellow, he died in needy circumstances, despite his versatile talents.

Rich never brought out another piece by Arne. Music he estimated as simply an adjunct to his splendid spectacles, pantomimic displays, and ingenious trickeries.

Thomas Arne had unwittingly cast in his lot with the man destined to wreck his innocent young sister's happiness, and fling a cruel blight over a life that might have been enviably fair.

ELIZABETH'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE CLOUD BURSTS.

I SAT in the twilight, staring back at the winter months gone by, as at a long stretch of turnpike-road, broken by so many milestones—letters from abroad, marking the distance gone. A packet of them lay in my lap; and I reckoned on another to-night. They had been punctual in their arrival, full in detail. And Willoughby had assured me his brother was no correspondent! Lively and entertaining too, starting a dreadful wish that they had not sounded quite so contented. Four years' captivity in Grandchester, tied down to a dull routine of onerous duties, whet the appetite for change of scene and experience. I felt with him, there. How he had enjoyed the voyage! how well he hit off the people on board, described his first station, first impressions of Anglo-Indian society—"Just like Grandchester," he informed me. "We have our Mrs. Wycherley and our Mrs. Titteridge"—the strange sights, strange dishes, strange redundancy of insect creation—the servants with unpronounceable names; hot water brought him in the morning by Banajee Bapoojee Sorabjee Lal Roy—not a deposed prince, by the way, but a bit of human salvage rescued from a famine by the missionaries, lost his last place for misdemeanour, and come begging James to give him a try. Spirits good. Health, as heretofore, robust; and I wasn't to bother, although Mayfly and Rubicund were both down, with fever and jaundice respectively, grumbling energetically at the temporary check put on really extraordinary capacities for brandy and water and tobacco, but promising to make up for that by and by. Mr. James, if unlikely to emulate them in this respect, was not idle either; hammering away at the vernaculars, hoping grand things to come from Lord Hazlemere's interest. Already he owed him a social debt or two—from a nod of recognition from a very high personage, down to a familiar acquaintance struck up with one Dr. Bernhardt, a great German naturalist and traveller, lately returned from Thibet, believed to have penetrated where no European before him ever trod, but who wrote little and never prated about his discoveries, lest publicity should hinder him in fresh journeys on which he was bent. He was planning one now,

to Trans-Himalayan regions ; one of the few happy hunting-grounds left to tempt the explorer, I was informed, where the surveyor has scarcely surveyed and the special reporter has not been. "A wonderful old fellow, this Bernhardt," wrote James further, "the simplest, most unpretending of human beings ; speaks eleven languages, dialects extra, knows more about the frontier tribes than any man living, cares for nothing but grubbing up plants and minerals. It's for that he's taking this journey to Badakshan and the sources of the Oxus. Lilla, you never heard of Badakshan."

"Nor you either," I promptly rejoined inwardly ; before coming to his confession that he had had to go to the map to clear up his mind as to the exact whereabouts of the explorer's destination.

Later letters had been full of this Dr. Bernhardt, and a certain Dick Johnson, a clever young civil engineer, whom James professed to envy, because he was to accompany the *savant* on his next excursion, as the agent of the Topographical Society. Aware of the ban prohibiting those of James's vocation from crossing the frontier, I felt safe so far in sympathizing with the spirit of adventure that prompted his remarks.

And I wrote back to say that Jack had got all his teeth now, and such teeth ! that Monty was prettier than his brother had been at his age, but not so big ; that Miss Ruck wanted his—James's—photograph in uniform ; that Gladys was being courted by Private Stock of the Hussars ; Captain Wellaway had sent his godson a silver mug ; that the india-rubber tree had a new shoot, and that by judicious contrivance I had squared remittances and expenditure. So much for matters private and domestic. Further, that the Hazlemeres were living in London now, that the little girl born to them some time ago was said to be a prodigy of prettiness ; that Charlotte Hope had made a grand hit as the Jewish heroine of "Miriam," a new melodrama ; that Mr. Gifford had become joint proprietor and editor of the *Daily Oracle*, and was said to be making a mint of money ; that Grandchester was kind enough, but meddlesome, and, and—there I fell into melancholy, and wrote a whole sheet in a minor key ; but I didn't send it.

The night's post came in, bringing me my usual letter, in the usual vein, with the usual quantum of tropical weather reports, shooting intelligence, Rubicund's last absurd mess-story, and the last absurd blunders of Lal Roy, who was improving though, and showed an extraordinary attachment to his master. Then he wrote who was ill, and who had left, and what was happening in society at the station, adding, "Just now I don't trouble it much. I want to see as much as I can of old Bernhardt before he goes." Then for himself came the alluring prospect of a few months' leave, to be spent with a brother officer at a lively hill-station, with a list of whose attractive diversions the letter concluded.

There was half a sheet more, of postscript, but here I let the

paper fall with a sigh and a rush of restless discontent. I felt I could be jealous. The future rose nightmare-like before me, as I saw his life over there, becoming more and more tolerable to him; my life of waiting, with a heart ill at ease, growing more and more irksome, whilst any attempt to escape from its *ennui* would raise a hornets' nest around my ears that I was in no position to defy. Positive hardships would be nothing to this ordeal of discomfort and stagnation combined. . . . I broke off—and taking up the postscript, which bore a later date than the letter, I read, feeling as if a bomb had dropped into my lap.

Dick Johnson ill with fever—obliged to give up the idea of starting with Bernhardt, James moving heaven and earth for leave to go in his place—the Topographical willing, Bernhardt delighted—authority the sole obstacle, but an insuperable one, he feared, and I might hope and pray. Sanction was not in question—a tacit understanding with the powers above him would suffice. His observations, should he be successful in taking any, would be theirs to profit by; whilst if he were not, no more would be heard of the matter.

Colonel Ferrers, to whom I confided the news, re-assured me. Not the faintest chance, he was positive, of the rule being relaxed; such enterprises were notoriously discouraged.

What all the concurring accidents were which so converged as to falsify the confident prediction, and determine James to break the rule—seemingly at his own risk—were then left partly to conjecture—the exact time, the particular destination, the specially favourable opportunity, the insignificance of the individual—but all whys and hows soon sank into insignificance. Before my return letter of protest had reached India, one from James, crossing mine, brought me as a first announcement:

"By the time this reaches you, Bernhardt will have started on his excursion. I go with him."

He had foreseen my first movement of blank dismay, and written at length to dispel it. You would think he was starting on a grouse-shooting trip to the Scotch moors with Captain Wellaway. I read and read, and found but this crumb of comfort: that, as his leave of absence was strictly limited, he was joining for part of the excursion only. A certain point reached, he was to return with a native explorer who formed one of the party, and a detachment of servants, whilst the indefatigable Bernhardt pushed his way on towards *terra incognita*.

Here Mrs. Freeman chancing to call, surprised me in a state of mind past concealment. I told her all. She burst out—as it were giving tongue to my own thoughts, declaiming in strong, plain language against the madness of the step, so uncalled-for, so foolhardy—she could hardly have believed it of my husband. Up I stood, promptly, in his defence.

"Not foolhardy," I objected. "Dr. Bernhardt is as prudent as

he is skilful. It is his boast that he has never lost a man in one of his expeditions. If he is not afraid of the perils of the route, depend upon it that's because he knows how to control them."

"But the climate, my dear, he can't control that."

"James says it's a glorious climate—one to raise the dead."

"Well, but the wild robber tribes that infest the mountains?"

"Dr. Bernhardt has been over great part of the ground before, and always succeeded in avoiding molestation—he has a perfect knowledge of the passes and the kind of people he has to deal with. He has penetrated without difficulty where others have been stopped."

My listener here broke out with sharp impatience past repressing:

"Then let Dr. Bernhardt go and imperil his life, and welcome—he is free, and well to do, with no one dependent on him. A young man with wife and children and only his earnings to look to has no right to go out of his way to indulge his love of adventure and travel, regardless of those he leaves behind him."

"Distinction won't come to you sitting in your bungalow smoking your hookah," I retorted with perverse indignation. "It was a chance—James went out of his way to seize it, and quite right too! Dr. Bernhardt had young men come to him by the dozen, wanting to throw up their positions for the privilege of joining him. But he says Dick Johnson and James are the only two in India he knows, whom he would care to have in his party. There!"

And the expenses were defrayed by Dr. Bernhardt and the Topographical—and the latter's grant was liberal. And part of the ground had never been properly surveyed, and the time was coming when all such information might be invaluable to the powers that be—which was doubtless why they had winked at his proceedings. James would be serving his country actively, just as if serving in the field, where just then there was no opening.

"You will be without news for months, I suppose," she said.

No doubt. But that, I reminded her, meant less the presence of danger than the absence of posts, the slowness of communication in mountain countries. The longest break would be no more than our grandmothers had to endure, if a husband or son were in India; or, till quite lately, any one with friends in Australia.

Mrs. Freeman shook her head, unconvinced. "My dear, you are two harum-scarum young people, that's the truth," she said. "Didn't we marry?" I replied, trying to laugh. She admired my bravery, she said, but wondered at it. Brave words make a good armour; ward off thrusts, and hide the gain-giving underneath.

No sooner was it bruited abroad that James had gone into the Himalayas on an exploring expedition—nobody cared to know more—than every one came to pity and condole, with James's con-

demnation on their faces if not on their lips. I buckled on my armour—reminding them all how in these days strange things become common, trains go flying across the desert, people start for the Congo as coolly as for the Rhine, and campers-out in the African wilds learn the result of the last handicap as soon as run, by telegraph and heliograph. Why, in a few years Dr. Bernhardt's route might become a beaten track for Mr. Cook to be thinking about. The world was moving on, though we at Grandchester liked to lag behind. So stoutly I defended my husband, with a cheerful countenance, and got maligned for it here and there as indifferent to his safety; and Mrs. Wycherley couldn't hide her discomfiture, when one day calling in nominally to inquire, really to glean scandal about Captain Wellaway whom she had seen go in at the door, she found Colonel and Mrs. Ferrers there too, all come to congratulate me on the news just received of the travellers' welfare. James had managed to send a line—reporting all well; his own objects partly accomplished—the good progress made would enable him to push a little further with Bernhardt before starting to return, by an easier route. He would telegraph his arrival within British dominion; thus I should not have long to wait now for that news, that he was safe back, the richer by a sum of money we could ill afford to despise, and marked out for approval by his superiors, his thirst for travel slaked.

So the worst was over. Congratulations came to me in advance. Then as the trial and tension relaxed, my spirits, that should have risen, drooped, under the reaction, in a senseless, singular way. Anxiety was dulled, but the gap between our two lives seemed to widen. Black thoughts and fears, unborn before, came to torment me, which not even Monty's beauty or Jack's intelligence could charm away. If you were inclined to mope Grandchester wouldn't stop you. It just shook you off; sufficient to itself in its changeless little round of play and earnest. Feuds were waged and sermons preached, parties given, flirtations flirted, scandals set flying, and matches made now and then, and one morning crossing the cathedral yard I was stopped by Mrs. Wycherley, who wanted to know if I was aware that my nurse-maid had been seen walking in the Castle Green with a soldier.

I wasn't aware of it as a historical fact, but was ready to take it on her authority, even volunteering a few particulars.

“Private Stock, of the 21st. They are acquainted, I know. Gladys has been with us for years, and I have found her a very steady girl.”

“I am glad to hear it, Mrs. Romney,” was the swift rejoinder, with the verjuiciest of smiles. “Perhaps we judge by different standards.”

“And the young man bears a good character,” I pleaded.

“So we all do, until we lose it,” she put in so blandly that I went straight on unsuspiciously:

"I can trust Gladys perfectly."

"Then will you request them to carry on their acquaintance somewhere else; not close to my garden, within view of my own servants, to whom, *of course*, nothing of the kind is permitted."

"It seems hard to forbid our servant girls on Sundays what we allow our own girls on week days," I retorted provoked. The Miss Wycherleys' flirtations with the officers were notorious.

And I was about to wish her a very good morning. Luckily for me, her attention had been drawn off by an approaching group of sight-seers, whom she pounced on at once like a detective.

"Those people again! I must really caution the verger against their admittance."

"Why, what harm are they doing?" I asked.

"They were in the cathedral, talking quite loud; that strange-looking woman and the man with the speckled necktie. Why, good heavens, Mrs. Romney, what is this?"

She started, she quailed, she shuddered—the group drew nearer; the man with the speckled necktie was taking off his hat, and the deep-toned voice of the strange-looking woman said familiarly:

"Why, Liz, I said it was you!"

"Miss Hope, Mr. Graves!" I exclaimed in amazement. I was rid at once of my companion, though she still hovered within earshot, laughing maliciously.

"One of your society friends here?" inquired Beattie Graves airily. "Why didn't you introduce me, Mrs. Romney?"

She may have heard, for she turned and quickly vanished out at the cathedral gate, leaving us masters of the field.

"Where do you come from?" I was asking of Charlotte. From Sandy Point, half an hour by rail—where they were doing a good business with "Miriam," and recruiting themselves besides. They had run over just to look up the cathedral and me.

I was seized, entreated, commanded to go back with them for the afternoon. I was looking pale, Charlotte discovered, and imperiously prescribed a whiff of sea air and a chat with friends, old and new. There was Davenant, who couldn't get ready in time to start this morning; and Mr. Gifford, also at Sandy Point for the week, come over to spend the day with the Ferrerses; and Mrs. Beattie Graves, whom her husband was anxious to introduce to me.

They carried their point by storm. It was easily arranged. Time for me to step home, give the children their dinner, and set things in order for the afternoon, whilst the tourists snatched lunch at the inn, where I should join them. So complete a surprise had shaken my spirits out of their torpidity already, and the little jaunt promised to complete their cure. It was so long since I had put my head out of my Grandchester cage that, when seated in the train between my two old vagabond acquaintance, I felt as elated as might Dr. Bernhardt on entering Thibet. I thought the

marshes picturesque, their damp airs delightful, Beattie Graves's jokes irresistible, and Charlotte, when we alighted at Sandy Point, announced that I looked another and a brighter creature already. Didn't wonder I drooped at Grandchester—significantly.

"It's relaxing," said I.

"Society astringent, eh?" Beattie Graves remarked; "to judge from the specimen in the cathedral yard."

"Not a fair one," I pleaded laughing.

"Fair? Not at all, to outward view," the incorrigible one replied musing. "She thought I was going to speak to her, and was quite ready to reply with her umbrella. This way to the sands, Mrs. Romney. As superior to those of Plymstone as the Quadrant to a turnip field."

As we strolled along talking and laughing, I inquired after everybody. Mr. Slater, where was he?

"Slater's come to grief," said Charlotte shortly.

"That means being found out, you know," Mr. Graves explained. "Shown his hand in some smart 'financing,' and had to scuttle. But, bless you, he'll bob up again by-and-by like a cork. Such fellows do. You see here," slapping his chest, "the manager—some say mismanager—of the Albatross until further notice. But if I go under, it'll be for good. I've no luck."

Annie, I was told, was still on her farewell tour—a circular tour, so Charlotte described it, that can never come to an end. Francis Gifford, as the moving spirit of a leading journal, had become a power, enunciated Mr. Graves impressively. "Mind you're civil to him, Mrs. Romney. Better offend a Cabinet Minister than a journalist. Indeed, where is the Cabinet Minister who could do me any harm—or any good, for matter of that? What's Power? Princes? No. Parliament? No longer. It's papers. That's the new *régime*, and Gifford's the modern man all round."

So they ran on as we paced the sands, admired of Graves, swarming with licensed victuallers and their families in gaudy attire, armies of nursemaids wheeling perambulators—all the small London shopkeepers come down to recruit. We looked in vain among them for Edwin Davenant. "Probably he's indoors," said Graves, "flirting with my wife. I'll go and stop that and bring him out to you here."

"You've heard about 'Miriam?'" said Charlotte as we walked on together, "of course. Can't you stop to-night and see it?"

"No," said I. "I must go back to my children."

She glanced up at me sharply. In this concert of festive jocularity my voice sounded strange and sad to myself. She returned with abrupt disapproval:

"Liz, I don't like your looks."

"Am I grown such a scarecrow?" I asked, forcing a laugh.

"Quite the contrary. I foretold as much. That's the very

thing," she said, shortly; then with one of her rapid changes of expression:

"Where's your husband?" she exclaimed. "A pretty sort of a husband—to go off leaving you to twirl your fingers, with two children on your back. What does it mean?"

"We were poor," said I with a gulp. "We married on the least we could do with. I oughtn't to complain, for James has got on, and I managed to keep things together. But we dared not move over seas at a time when we were counting our pence, and might have had to move back again as soon as we were settled. It was for the best; we shall be better off by-and-by. It was the only way."

Charlotte uttered no comment; but there was expressive pantomime in the workings of the point of her umbrella.

"What's this I hear about his going—tiger-shooting, is it, or elephant-hunting, or to discover the North Pole?" was her next question.

"He's on his way back now," I assured her nervously. "Very soon he should be at the station again. In a few days I may hear."

Her silence was more eloquent than the speech of some people, and at this moment declaimed emphatically on the superiority of the single state.

"How long is it since Richmond?" she asked with a derisive laugh. "Three years?"

"Four," said I. "Sometimes, when Jack and Monty are out of the way—now, for instance—it all seems to me like a dream."

"Good or bad?" she asked flatly. Then repenting and half laughing, "No, no, that's indiscreet—not a fair question."

Before I could answer Beattie Graves rejoined us, and with him Edwin Davenant. Four years had slipped over his glossy head like a day; he was ever the pink of *jeunes premiers*, who knew neither wear nor tear. We paraded the sands in a row; we might have been back at Plymstone. There was Charlotte, strong, fiery, and eccentric; Beattie Graves with his puns perennial; Davenant curling his moustache, pretending to be unconscious of the admiring side-glances of each ladies' school that filed past us on the beach.

At four we went in to tea at the inn; Beattie Graves's fair, pale, pretty, lively, invalid wife, Louisa, presiding, charmingly amiable, and talkative as the rest. Their random gaiety was catching. I felt the better for the dash out of harness, but time flew; my train went at five, and I was talking of saying good-bye when Graves, at the window, announced that Gifford was coming along from the station. Better stay and speak to him. Always show civility to the *Daily Oracle*.

"He looks as black as thunder," he added, puzzled. "What's up? I expect there's been a fire at the *Oracle* office."

Mr. Gifford came in—with a rapid glance around, that singled me out from the party as if I were the object of his search. Graves had a volley of facetious questions on the tip of his tongue, checked somehow, as Francis Gifford came up to me and shook hands, saying with a grave face and a demeanour whose studied quiet awoke vague disquietude :

“Mrs. Romney, I am glad to find you here. I thought it was possible. I have just come from Colonel Ferrers. He desires to see you.”

I was on my feet, looking at him blankly and wonderingly.

“Colonel Ferrers desires to see me ?” I repeated mechanically, then forcing steadiness to inquire, “He has not had news—news from—”

“No certain news ; nothing that can be relied on.” Then as I implored, demanded to know, he said reassuringly, as it were, “I fear it may prolong your anxiety ; but that, I trust, is the worst for which you have to be prepared.”

“Let me go,” said I with a dazed look round at the concerned, embarrassed faces. In all that had been spoken there was nothing to warrant this mortal dread. It was the set purpose I saw or suspected in the speaker, *not* to strike the note of alarm that had struck it.

I was threatened with a surging wave of deadly fear ; reason drove it back ; it might not come nearer. I collected myself ; Mr. Gifford was saying in a cool, matter-of-fact way :

“If you will allow me, I will accompany you back to Grandchester. Colonel Ferrers went to your house, where he is perhaps waiting for your return, if he hears it is expected soon.”

They were all pressing round me with kind looks and words. Mr. Gifford took me off quickly to the station ; it was only five minutes' walk ; the train was just starting as we got in.

Was it really myself sitting there in the carriage, with Francis Gifford opposite ?—thoughts past controlling, feelings jarred, slipped out of ken. The vibration of the train had a dull, stupefying effect ; my position, my uppermost, trivial impressions seemed unreal. It was like the waking of a person in a fever—figures, faces, objects, sounds striking my senses in unfamiliar fashion. I felt as if every moment I must wake up afresh and laugh at a delusion, a nightmare shaken off.

“Can you not tell me exactly what it is Colonel Ferrers has learnt ?” I heard myself saying presently. Mr. Gifford's reply came readily :

“I am not aware of any of the particulars. It is reported that Dr. Bernhardt's party have been delayed by severe weather. Colonel Ferrers does not attach great weight to the intelligence ; only as it must reach your ears earlier than can any other communication, he wished it to come to you—through him.”

Trying to read his countenance, I saw only that he avoided my glance: they were deceiving me. From Francis Gifford I should get nothing. But Colonel Ferrers was no actor—I should force from him all he knew.

The same road I had gone over but three hours before, with Charlotte and Beattie Graves, joking our way along, forgetful and careless; retracing it now, I sat stunned with the shock of some nameless, half-discovered feeling, sick with apprehension; and every phrase dropped by Francis Gifford to reassure me, though it brought a little steadiness to my head, somehow struck fresh chill to my heart.

Granchester was reached at last. Mr. Gifford secured a cab and accompanied me to my door. Miss Ruck opened it, and I heard his question whether Colonel Ferrers were still there, and her reply in the affirmative. But already I was upstairs, with my hand on the sitting-room door, and, the next instant, shut in with Colonel Ferrers, an old soldier, tender-hearted, as old soldiers can be.

Prepared though I was with my question, the words went astray, a numbness crept over me, my teeth chattered; his look of deep compassion took away my breath.

"Mrs. Romney," he began, and made me sit down on the sofa, "I see you know already I have serious news for you; but for your comfort, I can assure you beforehand we have no reason to assume it is well founded."

I was mute and motionless, my hands lay lifeless in my lap; reasoning power seemed stunned. I think all the intelligence I had left rushed into my eyes as I scanned his face. Like Mr. Gifford, he could not meet my look. I could speak now.

"You have news of something happened to delay my husband's return, news of——?"

"An accident to Dr. Bernhardt's party; a report only, of which every hour may bring contradiction."

"You are hiding what you know," I said. He looked at me pityingly, hesitating, as I continued, stretching out my hand:

"Show me the message—the telegram; you have it."

Painfully embarrassed, he urged seriously, "The contradiction may come any moment. Will you not wait?"

I had the paper in my hand now, but my eyes were dimmed. "Read it me," I said tremulously; "but—wait—tell me first, does it—leave me any hope at all?"

"Certainly, certainly it does," he said with determined cheerfulness. "I have telegraphed for fresh information, and till that arrives we are justified in hoping these tidings to be exaggerated, or utterly untrue."

Tidings of the arrival in India of several native members of Dr. Bernhardt's expedition, bringing news of a casualty to the party on a mountain pass, the track missed in a snow-storm, Dr. Bern-

hardt and several of his companions said to have fallen victims, the remainder barely escaping with their lives.

"Is it known that James was still with him at the time?"

"It appears so. His servant Lal Roy is among the survivors."

Lost, perished in the snow. I saw the words now, and they rang in my ears, but nature fought against the sense. I looked up at our friend, saying in stony bewilderment:

"Colonel Ferrers, do you believe it?"

He crushed the paper in his hand and paced the room agitatedly, repeating to himself:

"I can't, I can't." There was a break in his voice; my calm had let loose in him some feeling that was not sympathy for me. He half turned from me, muttering, and I heard the words as if coming from far off: "James Romney—gone! There's not another I'd not sooner have spared." Recollecting himself, he came and sat down near me, saying firmly:

"Mrs. Romney, this may be all a lie. You must hope."

"I do," I said.

"It's our fears we let run away with us. It's so with me—just because I'd give a kingdom to know he was safe."

Still supported by the hope they bade me cling to, I never thought of despair, and his words stirred a grateful feeling, as if hope were strengthened thereby.

"You did—value him, Colonel Ferrers," I faltered.

"Did I? I know I've often wished he were a son of mine. The sort are dying out. I know our youngsters—food for powder, mostly; but I took to him the instant he showed his face here."

I listened passively as he went on, perhaps with some dim notion of softening the pain of suspense by his words of praise.

"So did they all. Lord, how we laughed to see him sit that vicious old mare, like a centaur! and we used to come out to see him for a joke take up Mayfly with one hand and drop him over the wall like a kitten. There was a crank: there always is in youngsters of character, and—well, we all thought once he'd done for himself by a mad marriage. But we were wrong; it's been the making of him—you're a good woman," he brushed his sleeve across his eyes. "I say he was one who would have made his way to the front."

"Would have!" I echoed vacantly. The Colonel had broken down and could not speak. I felt the ground sliding away from under me.

When he looked up, in surprise at my frozen tranquillity, his expression changed suddenly, as at something in my face. He took out his watch. "My wife should be here by now," he said. "I left word for her to join me at once. Ah, Alicia—here she is."

She remained with me till nightfall. Every conjecture, every

supposition ingenuity could devise was put forward to ease anxiety and ward off despair.

They were right to keep plying me with hope as a stimulant, building up sanguine surmise until suspense prolonged became so intolerable as to seem worse than anything it could turn to.

The truth—that these hopes had been baseless from the beginning, mere fabrications, that no one but myself had been taken in by them for a moment, was borne in on me then with its crushing weight; and that before the full narrative of what had befallen—in its bare, merciless simplicity—came bringing the particulars of the disaster, taken down from the lips of those who had escaped alive to tell it.

CHAPTER XXV.

A FAREWELL AND AN ARRIVAL.

THEY tell you that in time of adversity you find out your true friends. Never believe it. It is only monsters of spite whom a natural humane feeling will not incite to show kindness to one crushed by heavy misfortune. To your worst enemies—cynics say your friends—the calamity causes a kind of pleasure, which by itself disposes them to act amiably on such occasions. It is when you are prosperous, and jealousy comes to the fore, that the quality of friendship is tested.

Even the few that had remained set against me; even the jealous, the social spies and slanderers, relented now, from one motive or another; and friends became friendlier than before. Mrs. Freeman visited me sick; Mrs. Bland sent flowers and fruit. Town and country lavished solicitude and attentions. They would have killed me with kindness. Old Dr. Smiles saved my life, by forbidding me to see any one but Mrs. Freeman. Neither drugs nor dainties would help here, as he knew. But looking back, from a distance of years, I render my hearty gratitude to Grandchester for its good intentions, whose reality was past mistaking. It would cheerfully have organized a subscription for me, and some would even have subscribed. Then, in time, it grew impatient of the little or no good kind inquiries could do.

For weeks, sustained by painful excitement, and behind it that wild unreasoning hoping in the face of facts that makes you believe in anything sooner than in your trouble, I bore up against the news. When the awful sense of the dreamlike unreality of such support forced itself upon me, body and mind sank under it.

I, who had never been ill in my life, felt now as if I were dying. Jack, Monty—like all else—seemed hardly realities to me. Or, if the old feeling of flesh and blood attachment to them awoke for

a moment, it followed I should take them with me out of the world I was leaving. Mrs. Freeman took alarm at my strange talk. Sometimes I overheard, as in a dream, her whispered dialogues with Dr. Smiles in the passage, she nervous and apprehensive, he matter of fact and reassuring, I listening with unconcern, as if it was some fourth person they were talking about.

"Patience, patience," said he. "She has broken down under the shock and the strain—poor woman—it is no wonder."

"Can her constitution rally, after such a shock? Do you know she looks and talks sometimes as if she were hardly in her right mind?"

"Time. Give her time. She is young and strong, Mrs. Freeman; she will outlive it. We outlive worse."

He knew, that dried-up wizen-faced purveyor of pills and draughts, the sight of whom, in the shaky-looking gig in which he had coursed about the town for twenty years, suggested nothing more romantic to anybody but a prescription or a bill. The tragic story that had determined his fate was ancient history now, but it had been told me. The story of a lad of talent and prospects, whose dearly-loved father, led away into foolish speculations and duped into apparent complicity in fraud, shot himself in a fit of despair when overtaken by ruin, the heavy charge of the beggared family falling on this son—a task he had sacrificed his life to fulfil, in humble, unheroic fashion.

Then there was the hospital matron, Miss Grey, she called herself. Mrs. Freeman had told me her story. Not twenty people in Grandchester knew that her real name was Wharton; but she might have owned to it now without fear of reminding any one of the famous Wharton trial. There had been half a dozen such trials since, fifteen years before, all England was talking of a startling crime, and the well-connected young man convicted of the murder, and the plea set up of insanity in which nobody believed.

Yet I was persuaded at heart that there never was loss like my loss. I had had no family to love; and these few years of happiness in cares and pleasures shared had shown me what a poor thing my life had been before. And now? When the earth shakes and upsets your house built upon the rock, the fall of it is greater than that of your neighbour's on the sand.

Again I heard my kind nurse and doctor talking me over, when they thought me asleep.

"Her apathy—so long continued—so unnatural to her temperament," said she.

"Time—the children," said he.

"Poor things! How will the three of them manage to get on? Sixty pounds a year is all they will have," she sighed, and the deepest, loudest pity was bestowed on this imminent necessity they foresaw for me of self-exertion—the least part, if part at all, of the trial. Pity a Lady Mabel when she sits face to face with

her grief, and nothing between. Do not pity the working-man or public servant who must address himself daily to his labour, heart whole or heart broken. No matter the order and degree of the worker and his work—whether a Cabinet Minister silencing the opposition in the House, or a clown convulsing pit and gallery. The strain may kill a weakling here and there, but so may the eternal *tête-à-tête* with a sorrow.

What roused me from my torpor was a letter to my address from Mr. Sherwood Romney, of the Mote, Hampshire. Some communication was to be expected; I opened it almost without curiosity, fancying that whatever its contents they could have no power to pain or to please me now.

They were plain and to the point. Assistance, moderate pecuniary assistance, was offered me, on two conditions: First, that I should emigrate and settle in one of the colonies; secondly, that my boys should be left in Mr. S. R.'s charge, and that I should absolutely surrender my rights over them and their education.

I showed the letter to Mrs. Freeman. Not that I was in doubt—but a second opinion would make my assurance doubly sure; either by confirming it or raising an opposition I should surely overcome.

She hesitated, then spoke reluctantly, but decidedly:

“ You will accept, hard though it sounds. Perhaps they would let you keep Monty—but for Jack you must accept, it is your duty for the sake of the child.”

“ My duty to the child,” I rejoined quickly, “ is *not* to toss him over to the tender mercies of strangers, and let him grow up without my love and care, reared on charity, taught to forget me or despise me—not, that is, if I can help it. If I felt myself despicable or incapable or had weak health, I should be helpless and *have* to submit. But if I can support the boys in tolerable comfort, I believe they will be better and happier with me. How do I know these people are kind and good? They may be—but they have not behaved very kindly to James—and they have judged me harshly and by hearsay.”

“ Even if you can keep them now,” she urged, “ how will you educate them, and start them in life?”

“ Am I the only mother in England who has her children dependent on her?” I replied. “ I am accustomed to work, and not afraid of it. I have friends in town who will put me in the way of getting some work that pays. Perhaps in a year or two, if I can save a little and see my way to getting on over seas better than here, I will go to Canada or New Zealand, with, and not without the little ones. But if in London I find things harder than I expect, if I lose my health and see the children likely to suffer more from our poverty than they gain from our being together, then I will accept Mr. Sherwood Romney's offer.”

"It might be too late—he may refuse."

"He will not refuse, then," I replied, for I said to myself that when that came to pass I, the impediment, should be starting on a longer voyage than to Canada or New Zealand.

She spoke of the struggle, the competition, the hand-to-mouth fight for a livelihood, calling up spectres that might, yet did not, shake my determination.

"My children must join in it in the end," I represented. "Mr. Sherwood Romney cannot adequately provide for them. He has nine of his own, and one among them who, to my knowledge, will not leave him a spare shilling. What can he give mine? House-room at the Mote, where they will grow up in the luxurious habits and expensive ideas of rich relations, and feel it a hardship later on to have to rough it to earn a subsistence. If I can bring them up to simpler ways of living and less dependent for enjoyment on parade and luxuries, they will be better off, even as the world goes, than under their grandfather's roof."

She dropped fruitless persuasions, foretelling that when calmer I should come to a different mind. "She has no children," I thought.

So I wrote back a formal, civil reply that I could not part with my boys. I thanked Mr. Sherwood Romney for the kindly aid tendered, whilst declining the hand held out upon such conditions. A brief answer came, to the effect that he trusted I should reconsider my decision; but, should it have been formed with any idea that he might recede from his terms, he desired to state, once for all, that they were absolute. The note required no answer, and I sent none.

Mrs. Freeman was no gossip, but she had friends who would worm a secret out of a wall, and the affair became for a while the talk of the town. Young people took my side, I was told; old and wise heads Mr. Sherwood Romney's. Not by argument, only by success should I win their voices. It was no matter, either, since one thing was clear, that Grandchester and I must part.

Emphatic encouragement came to me from two opposite quarters. "Such an inhuman proposition I never heard in my life," wrote Lady Hazlemere, from Prince's Gate, with an indignation that did me good, though of course it was unfair. "You must not owe anything to these people whilst they keep their present attitude. John hummed and hawed a little at first, but now he sides with me entirely, and says it was a most monstrous proposal."

"In your place," wrote Charlotte Hope, from St. John's Wood, "I should return your father-in-law's letter to him without a word. What fiends these respectable people can be when they try!"

I felt sure James's father was no fiend. From his point of view his action was right enough; and there was the rub. Knowing how he felt towards his son and towards me, I could not willingly have handed over to him the care of his son's children.

My unnatural languor, thus broken, gave place to an equally unnatural activity. To sit down and fold my hands meant to lose Jack and Monty, for I could not let them want. I took thought, made plans and calculations, wrote letters, and got ready to leave the only home I had known since childhood. Like many another poor family—how often I had seen them tramping along the London Road—we were drifting to the great city, looked upon rightly or wrongly as the grand work-market for all willing hands.

Grandchester seemed a little aggrieved by my desertion. "Stay where you have friends," urged Mrs. Freeman—a staunch friend she had been throughout. But friendships more lightly made would for me henceforth only mean patronage; nor was it in Grandchester that I should find some way to better my position.

Jack was overjoyed. The bustle, the packing up, the excitement of the journey and the change in prospect made him literally jump for joy. "Are you so glad to go away from Grandchester?" I asked him half sadly. "I want to go to London," he said slowly and sturdily. "I want to see the Queen and the Underground," the two sights he had heard Gladys talk about, and that had fired his three-year-old imagination.

"Going straight out into the world to work your own living, with two helpless young things dependent on you!" sighed Miss Ruck with foreboding emphasis. Mrs. Freeman was amazed, half shocked at so much courage and activity 'at such a time.' At a time when you feel past hope and fear, stone dead to tremors and all personal apprehensions that cloud resolution and check exertion, it is just as easy to face a path of lions as a path of primroses.

I wrote to my former landlady, Mrs. Hicks, in Leveson Street. I secured two top rooms I remembered in her house at a moderate rent. I sent up the least amount of furniture we could do with, and sold, or rather parted with the rest to an auctioneer, settled all accounts, and received the farewell visits of a few kind people. The day of our departure was fixed.

The last evening I went into the town on some necessary errands, waiting until after dark, when all my social acquaintance were indoors dressing for dinner. Coming home I passed through the Castle Green, the picture of desolation, like all such gardens in winter. But the dark night was not cold. Soft clouds were gathering as if for snow, and the fitful breeze stirring was refreshing. I walked hurriedly down the deserted avenue; some feeling led me to the bench by the centre fountain, there to snatch a few minutes' quiet. I had left both children sleeping, safe in Gladys's charge.

The roll of a carriage taking guests to a dinner-party, a drunken brawl in a distant street, the chimes of the cathedral clock broke the stillness at intervals, far-off sounds that merely deepened the sense of solitude. Already I felt cut off from the home I was leaving to-morrow, and I remember wondering idly if

among all Grandchester's twenty thousand souls—"Souls! Stuff and nonsense! say bodies, but never tell me they've a soul apiece," an exclamation of James's when ruffled by some soulless proceeding on somebody's part came back to my mind with the old laughing-feeling it had called up, like a stab)—if there was one who knew or cared how it was with me. The old mistrust had revived in some; but could anything ever hurt me much again? What I had lost seemed so incomparably dear that the mere recollection of it must surely henceforth be the sweetest, the only sweet thing for me. Here where I now sat alone, more than four years ago we two sat side by side and plighted our troth. I needed not to recall the beginning to tell what our love and union and time together had been in my life—the gold of it. James gone from me, there could be no such thing as consolation. There seemed no call to forswear the world. It was done. Some nuns take the veil and hide inside convent walls. Others move about in society, seeming to take part in the life of the world, whilst as completely cut off from it in their hearts as an Indian fakir in the desert.

I should not shut myself up; I should work for Jack and Monty, and never lose sight of what James and I had counted on bringing about in the end—our exculpation in his father's sight. That, if ever it came to pass, would even now give me pleasure. Would *he* know? Ah, who will answer that?

Then my thoughts, as always when the strain on them relaxed, flew off to the places he had last looked upon, those fatal hill-countries where in fighting savage nature and savage men so many have fallen and have yet to fall on the side that yet must conquer in the end. Graver and more striking fatalities are constantly being reported than the failure and loss of Dr. Bernhardt's obscure little expedition. Those interested in such things had already almost forgotten it in their jubilations over one successful traveller's walk through Africa and another's ride through the desert.

But to me, at Grandchester, where the sum of your outdoor risks was meeting a tramp on the high road, or trespassing if you went a step off it, the history sounded so strange and adventurous that, after two months, I had scarcely taken it in or ceased praying for and clinging to the hope of a miracle. But was it necessary to suppose a miracle? Servants lie sometimes. Could any one say for certain there were no other survivors, unable, it might be, to send a sign?

No. "That way madness lies." I had reason enough left not to go further on such a track.

But I was in an extraordinarily excited condition. It is the only time I ever experienced an approach to a hallucination. I seemed suddenly to feel a presence at my side, as on that sunny morning, to hear, as a dreamlike echo, the name, "Lilla," none but one had ever called me by. Instinctively I put out my bare hand. The chill night wind blew upon it. I shuddered. I was dreaming;

but not the less alone for ever. I buried my face in my hands and sobbed. I could not cry.

But, imaginary though the cause, a real and a better quiet stole in upon me, just as if his spirit and mine *hail* touched, to give and receive the message of a tender love that lives on, though death us do part.

Silly woman that I was, the sport of feeling and fancy, I presently went on my way homewards actually the happier for those few minutes. Can that instinct be false that says what we think and do can signify—even to one in the spirit world?

* * * * *

The person most grieved at my departure was Gladys. I had taken great pains with that girl, a charity girl, not worth her tea and sugar, let alone her ten pounds, to begin with, but who now might fairly aspire to twenty. She implored me to take her to London. I represented that I could not afford a servant, and that she was qualified to apply for a vacant housemaid's place at the Deanery. She wept torrents, and although I knew of a tall hussar who would soon dry them, I was touched by her attachment. She was honesty itself. You could trust her with your baby, your jewels, your purse—with anything in this world but a bottle of *eau de Cologne*.

Miss Ruck accompanied us to the station, from a mourn'ul sense of duty, and with an air as if following to the grave the remains of some disgraced relation. What moved her to tears was the sight of our third-class tickets. "Well, well, some think it's the safest," she sighed consolingly, wiping her eyes as she helped us in.

I never heard of a lady who travelled second or third class because it was cheap. Some choose it as cooler and airier; some, like Miss Ruck, as safer, since murderers, as is well known, always get into the first; whilst a few, of strictly Republican principles, will naturally prefer a chimney sweep to a lord for a travelling companion. I have never discovered any of the alleged superiority of the inferior compartments, unless it be a little Christian kindness and consideration, which the million more readily accord, even to a fellow-passenger. They don't glare at your baby, as if it were a monster, and they themselves had stepped into the world strong and fully equipped, nor resent the intrusion of a large bundle as a personal insult. Poor people know too well that the troublesome can't always be kept out of sight, and cheerfully accept the young 'un and chattels uncouth. The idea of its being anything but a privilege to sit out a two hours' journey with that cherub Monty! His aureole of curls drew loud expressions of admiration from a good-humoured farmer, who, further, kept Jack quiet for a whole hour with tricks with a pocket-handkerchief

and a bit of twine. "Bless you, I've six of 'em at home," he said, to my thanks; "I know how to tackle 'em better nor the missus herself."

But the train lagged. Monty fretted and was miserable, and even Jack's three-year-old philosophy gave way, as to his ceaseless litany, "When shall we get home, when shall we get home?" "Soon, soon," I kept replying, and the end seemed no nearer.

Worst of all was the home when we got there. First, London in thick darkness, a heavy drive through streets inches deep in melting snow, then a cab full of babies and bundles set down in Leveson Street, then chaos indoors.

Not a bed made, not a scrap of fire, furniture anyhow, crib jammed into the fireplace, wardrobe the centre-piece in the sitting room; landlady sulky, having just quarrelled with the maid, the maid a virago, having just got warning, two little fellows clamouring imperiously for their tea, unaccustomed to want and wait.

When I had got them their meal in the wilderness, coaxed the virago into venting some of her ill-humour in the wholesome exertion of moving the boxes; set essentials in order, got the children to bed and to sleep, and swallowed some morsels of food myself, I felt that the worst must be over. I sat down to breathe, to rest, to bethink me. It was nine o'clock; I stayed for a quarter of an hour, not idle, but like a general in his tent, planning to-morrow's battle, flattering himself the day's disturbances are over.

The virago put in her head abruptly, saying in her peculiarly disagreeable manner and accent:

"There's something at the door for you."

"Something left in the cab," said I rising, dazed and weary.

"I told him you'd nothing for him."

"Him—is it a person?"

"It's a black beggar. Pah!" with disgust. "I vowed I wasn't going to open the door to the likes of him."

"Did he give any name?" I asked authoritatively.

"Roy—Rob Roy—Lal Roy—some heathen gibberish. Blest if I'm going to carry messages for a nigger!"

Fatigue—drowsiness vanished, I shot past her down four flights of stairs to the street door and opened it. A dark, strange-looking wretch was shivering on the doorstep. I could just see his copper-coloured face and eager eyes.

"He said he take me back with him," he stammered in broken accents; "I serve Mr. Romney in India—now he dead, me come—pray ladyship—me serve you same."

I stood speechless. The senseless excitement of the first moment, the insane disappointment of the second left me half silly, as I motioned to him to come in and shut the door. The landlady came out to protest. I faced her, saying as steadily as I could:

"This man was my husband's servant in India. I wish to speak to him, to hear anything he may have to tell me."

She became more civil, and let him follow me upstairs. He was thoroughly exhausted; and seeing how hungrily he eyed the remains of our repast I told him to eat and drink, wondering meantime what I should do. No doubt there was a workhouse; possibly a special home for coloured casuals, if one only knew where. He ate ravenously, but sparingly; then having recovered sense and spirit, gave his account of himself pretty volubly, in intelligible English.

Set upon making his way to this country, friendless and penniless, he had begged it to the Bombay coast, hidden in the hold of a London-bound vessel, and when they found him out they were obliged to keep him. He made himself useful and liked on board, and they got up a collection for him, so that he landed at Gravesend with a few shillings in his pocket, and started for Grandchester, to hear I had just left it.

He besought me to keep him. He would serve me for nothing if only he might stay. I was in need of charity myself, and to be begged of sounded like a grim joke. Shelter for the night he should have, and the landlady, when she heard he had been brought up by the missionaries, agreed not to turn him out into the snow, if I had no objection to his bivouacking among the boxes in our sitting-room. I had none. There were no valuables. He was trustworthy, and had been devoted to James, as his coming to seek me out proved afresh; though for a pensioner to drop on me from the clouds I had rather have chosen another moment.

The passing excitement of this singular occurrence and startling apparition kept me wakeful all night, and then, dead tired, I slept late next morning.

Coming into the sitting-room I found, to my surprise, Lal Roy astir and busy. Playing housemaid! He had gone to work with an old scrubbing brush, swept and dusted, cleared away the rubbish, washed the plates and laid the fire. He was at present on the stairs chattering to the virago, whose curiosity was now excited by his strange but not unprepossessing exterior. As for the landlady, he had boldly told her he was Mrs. Romney's servant, and by the subtle civility of his manner managed to edge a little way into her good graces. I gave him his breakfast, but told Mrs. Hicks I might as well hope to keep a carriage as a manservant. To my surprise she took his part.

"He seems a handy lad," she remarked. "And I don't care if I do give him board and lodging for a few nights. It'll be a good deed, and he can help with one thing and another till I get a new girl."

He implored to stay on. I believe only by calling in the police could she have got him to budge. He wanted no wages, he said.

He was used to work for English people and knew what they liked.

And in a day or two Mrs. Hicks came to me herself to propose a trial arrangement. She would give him the little box-room to sleep in, and help to board him, she and I sharing his services. In short she proposed to get twice the work of an English house-servant out of him for next to nothing, and dispense with all other aid but a charwoman's. Nor was she disappointed. Lal Roy, however, never considered himself anything but my servant. The children took to him directly, and the landlady, knowing he would not stay a day longer under her roof than I did, grew daily more amiable and obliging, and what had seemed a crowning trouble promised, before the week was out, to add very materially to our comfort.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FRIENDS IN COUNCIL.

LAL Roy soon became a fixture, next a prominent feature in our establishment. He was a model, a unique sort of a servant—the luckiest compromise between a machine and a rational animal. Quick and handy by nature, clean and obedient by training, honest, I verily believe, on principle, he had his little fault—a kind of colour-blindness to the difference between truth and lying—which I must hope to amend before Monty was old enough to take the corruption. There, sturdy Jack was fortunately incorruptible.

For the rest Lal Roy was an angel in the house. Scoff at the inferiority of the dark races, and their being fit only for servitude! Better be fit for servitude than for nothing at all, like many of us whites. Our landlady's niece, Olave, played false notes on the piano, worked yellow flowers on a green ground, and spent hours embroidering her evening shoes, and nobody missed her very much when she was from home; but when Lal Roy was laid up for two days with influenza the whole house groaned, and was thrown off its hinges.

It takes but a short while to settle down in a hermitage—a bare retreat like mine. Just a day and a night nursery, sketchily furnished. Jack, once reminded that Robinson Crusoe had neither carpets nor curtains in his desert island, and that this was to be our desert island till a ship came and took us away, was quite satisfied with his quarters, and in no hurry for the ship. With Lal Roy for our man Friday the analogy was complete. What a joy, too, to have the run with Monty of the entire sitting-room for a playground, strewn with toys and toy wreckage—just a corner in the window allowed for my work table and myself; and between, on the common land next the fire-place, our one *objet de*

luxe, a large leathern armchair, with a singular power to act on juvenile imaginations. A fire engine, a cart horse, the cave of Ali Baba, a balloon, and a bathing-machine; it has been all by turns in a single afternoon.

No doubt we enjoyed, as every London beggar enjoys, privileges denied to a lord two centuries ago. A policeman at the street corner, the street itself paved, gas-lit all night through, thirteen postal deliveries a day, and telegraphic communication with the world's end, so that if anything dreadful happened at San Francisco you were sure to hear of it the next morning—superfluities in plenty, whilst simple necessities ran scarce. For a drop of pure milk it was a job to procure, a new-laid egg something to dream of, like a roc's. You could eat nothing you bought at a venture, without fear and trembling, and needed to be an analytical chemist to know what it was, except that it wasn't what it professed to be; for ever on your guard against butterine, tinted vegetables—the phylloxera of food-adulteration—while the fresh air, sunshine, and space that every young savage enjoys bade fair soon to become mere metaphorical expressions.

And yet we were better off than most. The tall trees behind our street, though doomed, like the aboriginal red men by the appliances of civilization, were not dead yet, and the cawing of the rooks recalled the lime-planted cathedral Precinct at Grandchester. My home there had never been luxurious—the constant probability of being ordered away had removed all temptation to add piece of furniture to piece of furniture. Then I had been too well content to covet my neighbour's state; now, for opposite reasons, a cell and a palace seemed pretty well on a par. Plain living could not add to my loneliness, nor purple and fine linen and sumptuous fare diminish it. It was Jack there, leaning his little soul on me, child-fashion, as on the rock that could not fail him, and merry little Monty, whose life apart had only just begun, who spurred me to the endeavour to secure our independence, since the least mishap now meant the alternative of seeing them suffer or abandoning them to the charity of others.

My first visit was to Lady Hazlemere at Prince's Gate. "Come, dear," she wrote, "and let us talk over your plans. I have several in my head. Bring Jack to play with my Gerty."

So one afternoon, leaving Monty commander-in-chief of the premises—of Mrs. Clarendon Hicks, Miss Olave, Lal Roy, and the charwoman—that little scamp's face was his fortune and won him tender attentions wherever he showed it—I took Jack for his grand outing by the Underground. Noisy and noisome, it enchanted him, because he could make believe he was going down a coal mine.

Lady Hazlemere was out riding but would be in directly, said the pale, reflective-looking footman who showed us upstairs. "Is that their Lal Roy?" whispered Jack as we went. At the

drawing-room door he stopped dead, struck by the strangely pretty things he beheld within as at the sight of strange people.

Aladdin's palace has become a poor simile, now that western wealth and invention have far outstripped Oriental imagination. The boy was a little dazed at the multiplication of Jacks twinkling in the mirrors, and sat on the edge of his chair waiting for the performance to commence. If a fairy had sprung out of the floor, or flowers come tumbling from the ceiling, it would merely have been one wonder the more to stare at. Such soft tones of colour in the hangings, such pretty treasures peeping out of every corner, the prettiest a statue of Psyche bought long ago by the Duchess because of its fancied likeness to Lady Mabel; whilst the flowers—cyclamens, lilies, tulips—in their size and symmetry seemed quite as much works of art as the Indian embroideries and Venetian glass. Presently horses' trampling was heard on the terrace, and Lady Hazlemere came in to us quickly, girlish-looking as ever in her close-fitting riding habit, her colour heightened, her curls loosened by exercise. The tricksy princess of the fairy tale I had walked him into, thought Jack, nervously gripping my hand as she embraced me effusively, with the sympathy in her eyes she dared not speak, and, to ward off show of painful emotion, forcing a light and trivial gaiety.

"My hair's down," she said, as a wandering lock swept her cheek. "It was the wind. We raced, old Sir George Buckram and I. He said we should be summoned for furious riding, and John got frightened, for the new mare had never carried a lady before. It did seem off its head rather, and John said I should be over its head next; but I suppose we were well suited, for we did not part company."

She had seated herself on the sofa, drawing Jack towards her for inspection, stroking his head.

"What a sturdy little man it is. My young Alcides, you would have strangled the snakes in your cradle, wouldn't you?"

"It's Monty's cradle," stated Jack low, but with alacrity. "I've got the crib now," turning shyly to me to corroborate this important domestic truth.

"Come," she said, springing to her feet and taking his hand, "come upstairs and be introduced to my fairy."

Fairy Gertrude was a tiny beauty of two and a half, almost too pretty to be real; quick in her movements, nice to watch, like a little humming-bird flitting about its delicate nest. She and Jack eyed each other askance, not unfriendly.

"Show him the toys, Gerty," said her mother quickly; then to me, "She has such a collection. It is John's fault. He is quite incorrigible. She knows she has only to fish in his pockets when he comes home."

For her costly playthings—the peacock that walked and spread its tail, the cock that crowed and raised its crest, the bear that

munched the orange, the doll's house with real staircases, bells that rang, and doors that opened and shut—she did not care particularly, but Jack's delight in these novelties fascinated her as something new.

Lady Hazlemere having exchanged her habit for a Pompadour tea-gown, we left the children chattering confidentially and returned to the drawing-room. Her colour had faded already, her animation relaxed, and she reclined there among her art furniture and exotics reminding me of little Gerty among her toys.

"Now tell me about yourself," she said presently, taking my hand affectionately, "and your idea. You want to bring up your children in the country, you said. Then why not take a cottage at once? I know of a beauty, and very cheap; only five shillings a week."

My idea, I told her, went a step further. I planned to earn and lay by a small sum, sufficient to start a small, moderately-remunerative country industry.

"A dairy farm?" her eyes sparkled like Jack's at some childish delight; "that would be charming, and milk's all the fashion now."

"I haven't got so far as the particulars," I said. "Meantime we have sixty pounds a year, on which I must manage, putting aside what I may earn beyond."

"You are like the people in 'Self Help,'" she sighed, with the sort of admiration you might bestow on a Blondin crossing Niagara on a rope. "You ought to make a fortune."

"I'm not of the fortune-making sort," said I. "Very likely I shall find it impossible to make, say, a hundred pounds."

"That isn't much; that ought to be easy. John's cousin, Maude Arbry, is not half so clever as you, and they gave her five pounds for painting a set of Christmas cards. Twenty sets would make the hundred."

How many pounds worth of lessons Miss Maude had had to take to enable her to earn the five was a bothering question, not to be shirked. "But I've a better plan than that," she said. "You shall open a Kindergarten school where you live; I can recommend it to lots of people, who will send their children."

But for that I must take a house, and my scheme forbade present outlay, whilst I was resolved not to borrow. She was still far from the end of her resources. *Æsthetic* dressmaking, amanuensis-work, shorthand, the secretaryship to a philanthropic society. This last was the very thing, we agreed. The only objection was that the post had just been filled up.

Of whatever under heaven you were talking with Lady Hazlemere you were usually thinking of herself. Her singular personality, magnet-like, would draw away the attention of the veriest egoists from their affairs to her own. I had made my re-

flections and been struck by the physical languor underlying her animation.

"Is the scent of the flowers too strong for you?" I asked presently.

"No; I am used to it. John likes them: it is his weak point. He would be a perfect anchorite in his tastes if flowers and nicely-bound books didn't exist. I encourage his failing, that may be extravagant without compunction when I want to. Then I take them to the hospitals and workhouses: they seem glad of them there."

"Do you go there much?" I inquired.

"Almost every day. Would you believe it, John wants me to give it up. He declares I am not strong enough, that it tries my nerves, and so on."

"Have you been there to-day?" I asked.

"This morning. He was vexed; but he is wrong. I can stand it perfectly well. At least . . ."

"I am afraid he is right," I let fall, for her colour had changed to a deathly pallor. She leaned back on the sofa, and seemed to gasp for breath. I got her salts from her pocket and wanted to summon Gerty's nurse.

"Don't," she entreated, "she will tell John and frighten him. It is nothing—wait."

I sat by till presently the strange attack passed off, and she partially recovered herself, but traces left in her countenance bore witness to the reality of some nervous disturbance.

"You are not to tell John," she reiterated; "he worries absurdly; and he can do nothing."

"Have you told your doctor?" I asked.

"He says it is hysteria, he thinks."

"Which means he knows no more about it than you or I," I returned, with health's indignant contempt for medical practitioners. "Do you think so yourself?"

"I suppose if I did I should not be hysterical," she said, half laughing. We now heard the children's prattle outside, Gerty's fingers puzzling with the door handle, turned for her resolutely by Jack, and they came in. At the sight of the pale princess on the sofa in her rosy coloured gown, Jack, taken with shyness, sought relief in flinging himself on my knee with over-demonstrative filial affection. Gerty was whispering in her mother's ear, might she give Jack the jumping frog—he liked it so. "Anything you like, Gerty," said her mother listlessly, as she lay with closed eyes.

Lord Hazlemere now joined us, and she brightened instantly and raised herself, but Gerty was first, darting up to him with a cry of glee, to be lifted up, kissed, and placed somewhat rashly on his shoulder, whence nothing would dislodge her. The child, instinctively aware of his lavish fondness, took advantage of it

artlessly and openly. I was not dreaming; a shade had come over Lady Hazlemere's face—an expression of pain—she choked a sigh. He had seen nothing, but he put down Miss Gerty and came to sit by his wife, to ask if she felt tired after her walk and shake his head at her impetuous disclaimer. Then he begged her to give up some of her next week's engagements—early service, committee-meetings, visits to workhouse, infirmary, children's hospital. She listened dutifully, as wives do when they have not the remotest intention of giving in.

"Are you afraid I shall look like my ghost at the Hohendorffs' reception to-night?" she asked playfully. "You know I always brighten up in the evening."

With a helpless air he appealed to me.

"She is killing herself with good works. Do persuade her!"

"Don't listen to him," she retorted. "Who sets the example? Who rushes off, in defiance of doctors, to a cold committee-room with bad influenza and comes home with bronchitis? . . ."

Here Gerty called off his lordship's attention, requiring him to take her and Jack to his dressing-room, where chocolates grew. "Carry me," she added, and he obeyed. "Carry Jack too," was her next order. It was Jack who objected. I believe if she had said, "Stand on your head," her father would have complied.

"Did you ever see such a pair?" sighed Lady Hazlemere, watching them out, half wistful, half amused. "Could you have believed John would ever be like that with a child?"

The *rôles* of father and mother were reversed in this household. Motherhood had not made of Lady Hazlemere a woman like others. She prized the little thing as a treasure, —a jewel; if Gerty had a finger-ache she was all anxiety and watchfulness; but the child was to her a thing apart—not part of herself as my Jack was part of me.

"Gerty will be very like you," I said. There was a singular resemblance.

"Like me as I once was—or as he fancied me. Like me in reality—I hope never. Gerty is a good little thing. I think she will be like my mother."

"Are you not happier now you have the little one?"

"Much. John is quite happy now, you see. He has something to love—without reserve."

There was no bitterness in her tone, but it betrayed a lingering regret, the seed whence had sprung that half-unconscious jealousy of her husband's affection for her child.

The trio reappeared, and on the instant she was all sweetness and fun. It was time for us to take leave. "Must you go?" she asked reluctantly. "It is raining. Impossible to walk to the station; you must have a cab home. Can the driver be trusted? I shall send Charles on the box. It will be safer; will

it not, John? Charles will see you to your door and bring me back word. He is a Positivist and a very serious man."

They insisted, so Jack and I drove home under the escort of the Positivist footman. Jack, drowsy yet excited, wandered in his talk, persuaded that Gerty had two mammas—the lady in the riding-gown and the lady in the dressing-gown, as he put it—till at last drowsiness and dreams prevailed. Personally I was not sorry to see again the smoky brick front, like a chimney turned inside out, of No. 10, and Lal Roy's dark face on the full grin at the door. He had a little note for me—just come, he said: a note in Charlotte Hope's large hand and favourite violet ink.

"The Chestnuts,

"Delta Road, St. John's Wood,

"Saturday.

"Come to-morrow evening, at eight. Tiger and I shall be alone."

I had been to Prince's Gate for advice, and come back very little the wiser. Better luck at Delta Road, thought I, undaunted, as I toiled upstairs, carrying dead-sleepy Jack, who seemed to have turned suddenly to lead in my arms. No fear to-night, at least, of his drawing invidious comparisons between his and Gerty's surroundings.

Charlotte was just now in the very heyday of prosperity. Living on an allowance from her creditors, she had never, she declared, been so well off in her life.

It was not my first visit to The Chestnuts, and the impression made on me long ago by Charlotte's home had remained in my mind—a vivid picture. I found the same rambling, unmethodical little house as ever, a house that matched its mistress exactly; its large garden just now a desolate two acres of spungy grass, interspersed with black bristling poplars, thorns and lilac clumps, looking as unlikely ever to bear leaves again as a broom. From living alone, Charlotte had contracted a morbid distrust of humanity, and would have no servants to sleep in the house, persuaded that robbery, if not murder, was their intent. The garden gate, yielding to my hand, rang a bell within, responded to by the old bulldog Tiger, crouching on the doorsteps. His deep bay and set teeth would have intimidated a Sykes; they were all that was left him of his native ferocity. Grown lazy and tolerant he succumbed to a coaxing voice and a caress.

His eccentric mistress opened the door to me in person, extra eccentric. From her attire, a gymnasium suit of grey linen, you would infer that besides being her own house-servant she was her own plasterer and paperhanger. Not so; but for two years past she

had been studying sculpture, her serious vocation, she now believed —acting was only a pastime. In an ex-coach-house at the bottom of the garden she spent all her leisure, modelling. The little entrance lobby was adorned with some spirited specimens of her skill—animals were her favourite subjects—and in the centre stood a cast of her masterpiece—Tiger—which had been exhibited in marble and instantly bought by a dog-fancying lord.

She led me through a *portière* into the sitting-room, where a solitary gas jet burning forbade you to get beyond a guess at its appointments, half-business-like and professional, wholly uncomfortable, just as of old.

“Now, what can I do for you?” she began, with that stand-and-deliver air of hers that had intimidated me, a raw girl of nineteen.

“Advise me,” I said.

“That's cheap; but demands a cigarette,” suiting the action to the word. “Cheap, and generally speaking nasty, and therefore not taken. I understand you want to do something for yourself and kids.”

“Something to better our circumstances and help me to educate them as I should like to.”

“Come back to us,” was her instant rejoinder. “I can promise you an engagement as soon as you're ready for it. Five pounds a week, more by-and-by.”

Then as I sighed and shook my head, she broke out impatiently:

“There, you won't. Anything but the one thing you can do, or can get to do. I knew it. You've grown fastidious down at Grandchester, consorting with bishops and lords and their ladies. Then why in heaven's name do you come to Charlotte Hope for advice?”

Disregarding this ferocious satire I pointed out that I could take no work that would keep me from home morning, noon, and night.

“Short of a mangle,” quoth Charlotte, curling her lip, “I don't know what there is you can do, and teach the hornbook between. But some ladies paint on china.”

“Give me the mangle,” I cried out; “work that's wanted.”

“Nobody's work is, strictly speaking,” she declared. “Take what you can get, and never forget there are hundreds pushing behind who would do it as well or better, whatever it is. Pray, do you suppose that if I, Charlotte Hope, tumbled into the pond to-morrow, the Albatross would be at a loss for a new attraction?”

“Candidly, I think nature, when she had made you, broke the mould.”

“So much the better,” she said. “Better still had she thought

twice about making it." Her countenance clouded. Even cheerful people mostly turn gloomy when their thoughts are turned inward to themselves. But Charlotte's gloom was menacing, like a tropical storm-cloud, a force of nature with portentous powers for mischief.

"Don't pity me," she said, looking up and catching a tell-tale glance. "Don't you know I hate pity. It's the boiling oil that friends, like doctors in the Dark Ages, keep pouring into our wounds."

She was in a pleasant humour. It seemed safer to keep to my own troubles.

"I hoped you would pity me, Charlotte," I said, "and help me with a suggestion."

"Well," she suggested, morose and perverse, "there are the people in Hampshire."

"You, then," said I, "are the one to advise me to give up James's children of my own accord, as if I were as unworthy to be their mother as the people in Hampshire believe me."

"The crocodiles!" she cried, becoming violently sympathetic again—she knew no medium. "Show them you can snap your fingers at their charity doles and mean conditions; and have friends who'll stand by you through thick and thin. Now I'll tell you what—"

Here Tiger's bay and the tinkling of the visitors' bell cut short her speech. She rose and peered through the window.

"Francis Gifford!" Her altered tone bespoke some surprise. "I thought he was at Brighton." And she was walking out to meet him in the lobby, regardless of her clay-stained apparel, when, as though my look had put her in mind, she stopped short, with a changed countenance and a careless, "Ah, to be sure. Entertain him," she added to me coolly, "whilst I go and dress," and promptly disappeared.

Apparently the front door was used to be left open and Tiger to play door-keeper, for presently in trotted the dog, followed by the visitor. I rose, flurried and unhappy. Francis Gifford or another—no matter, each first meeting with a former acquaintance was like the searing of a hot iron. But it had to be gone through; and he, after his first movement of surprise, desirous perhaps to relieve my painful embarrassment, shook hands and bore himself just as if he had come on purpose to call on me.

"Miss Hope will be here directly," I told him—"if you will wait."

He sat down and we discoursed on the casual nature of the attendance at The Chestnuts. Mr. Gifford spoke of a gardener and wife, who inhabited the lodge, but this being Sunday, they were out. It recurred to me now that among the letters I had received two months ago, there had been one from him that had somehow stood

out among many kind nothings as a kind something, if only because it contained none of the commonplaces borne by the others, as surely as they bore the stamp outside.

"I scarcely expected to meet you in London," he said by-and-by, in a tentative way, continuing presently in a tone not of idle curiosity but of grave interest:

"Have you come back to your old stage friends?"

Now I wished every one to know my true position. I spoke of my continued estrangement from my husband's family, adding, "As I cannot afford to be idle, I came to consult Miss Hope about getting something to do."

"On the stage?" he asked. I said no; and he fell in, with cordial agreement, "Of course." Then, as if taking the thoughts out of my head, "You would rather not introduce any fresh obstacle in the way of future approaches on the part of your husband's family."

I assented, but remarked that necessity might leave me no choice. "Perhaps it was rash to come to London," I added; his manner seemed to invite to matter-of-fact consultation. "If it is the largest work-market, it is also the most overcrowded with workers."

"With incapable workers," he rejoined. "I should know! They come to me by scores for engagements. Copyists who cannot write legibly, translators unacquainted with foreign languages, actresses without voice or talent, playwrights without ideas. The market is everywhere overstocked—but with bad labour."

"Mine would be of a very poor merit."

"You must give your friends leave to doubt that," he said good-naturedly. "But though mere merit may suffice to keep a place won, it is push and self-assertion that win it; virtues perhaps you have never taken pains to cultivate."

I could not help smiling. "Do you think it is too late to begin? Oh, I could try, for the children."

"Have you thought of anything?" he asked.

"Teaching. Everybody always thinks of that first. But I know nothing."

"That's no obstacle. Could you successfully elbow out the other candidates, and flatter the parents of your pupils?"

"You are very discouraging," I complained, "more so than any one."

"I don't mean to be," he said, "as I will show you, if you'll allow me to make a suggestion."

Enter Charlotte. "I shall never know," thought I, "what that suggestion would have been," and I felt sure it would have been invaluable! Miss Hope, having managed one of those rapid dress-transformations in which stage-practice had made her an expert, stood before us in a rich evening robe of damask brocade. Never had I seen her so becomingly dressed, or looking in her strange

way so handsome. She gave her visitor her hand, saying, "What has cut short your holiday?"

"The death of Professor Churchmouse," he replied, naming a notable man of science.

"Why, that happened Saturday, before you left."

"Exactly. One of our men sent me an obituary notice I could not print. Not a word of truth in it from beginning to end."

"Is that a reason?" she asked, rallying.

"None in itself. Only if you put fiction for fact, you should know how. I had to stay and do it myself. I have called on my way to the Graves's 'at home,' to ask if you are going there to-night. He will lend the Albatross for a performance for the Professor's widow, and would like to talk over it with you."

"I am coming," she said, "as soon as I have driven Mrs. Romney home."

He took the hint not to detain her, just glancing at me, as if uncertain whether to finish the sentence her entrance had interrupted, and decided in the negative.

He escorted us to the gates, found us a hansom, and passed on the Leveson Street address to the driver. Beattie Graves's villa, whither both he and Charlotte were bound, was in one of the roads hard by.

Charlotte in donning her finery had donned silence and abstraction. During the drive she seemed self-engrossed, and only woke up when she deposited me at my door, and it was too late for further consultation. We parted and went on our ways, she to her merry party, I to my nursery.

It was early days to despair, but I came pretty near it that night, when I reached my sitting-room, tired, dispirited, and asking myself whether what I had taken up as a noble task, a sacred trust, was perhaps after all but a foolish woman's dream, as every attempt to take hold of it by the practical side seemed to show.

Lal Roy had come in, bringing tea. He invented pretexts for staying about the room, watching me with a wistful, half-pathetic look; showing he had noticed my despondency.

I let him stay. I made him talk. Hitherto I had shrunk from questioning him about the past. To-night a reasonless impulse led me to try and gather from him all he remembered of that fatal journey, the particulars of the time of travel previous to the disaster. He would have run on about it till midnight, yet the scope of his reminiscences was absurdly narrow, and the sum of them soon told. He had travelled among strange countries and strange people taking note of nothing but what the party had to eat, and the amount of luggage they carried. And though on the score of adventures Lal Roy was ready to romance to the charwoman, with me he was constrained to admit that up till the very last all had gone easily and well. "Dr. Bernhardt, he

wonderful patient man—he make everybody do all he want." Mountain travelling was regarded by Lal Roy as a prolonged picnic, and though childishly terrified by the least visible danger, he lived in childish *insouciance* to hazards unseen.

(*To be continued.*)

A SONG OF FAITH.

I would not die for thee,
 Nor sigh the live-long day;
 Nor, 'neath some riven tree,
 Mourn for my love alway.
 No! For this life is long,
 And many a song
 Must borrow from sorrow
 Sweet melody.

But I would live for thee;
 Wrestle and conquer Fate,
 Suffer, if need there be,
 And for my guerdon wait.
 Yes! Though this life is long,
 And troubles throng,
 'Gainst sorrow we borrow
 Love's panoply.

Hark! how triumphantly
 Through the dim æons past,
 Echoes the blessed decree:—
 Love shall prevail at last!
 What then?—if life be long,
 My faith is strong.
 O'er sorrow the morrow
 Breaks gloriously!

